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ALLEN WELSH DULLES  
AS DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
26 FEBRUARY 1953 - 29 NOVEMBER 1961  
VOLUME V INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT OF POLICY

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by

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Allen Welsh Dulles

As Director of Central Intelligence

26 February 1953 - 29 November 1961

Volume V Intelligence Support of Policy

Chapter 1

Warning of the Suez Crisis of 1956

One of the main responsibilities of intelligence is to warn the US Government of impending developments which involve US security. An important instance when this warning function was called into action was the Suez crisis in the fall of 1956. Did the intelligence community in general and the CIA in particular fulfill its task?

The Suez crisis has been the subject of abundant writing. The events leading up to it are known now, the military actions of Israel, France, and Britain have been described in detail, as have been the political maneuverings before, during, and after the crisis. One of the charges from the American side has been that the United States was kept in complete

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darkness about the whole affair until military action began. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles told the Senate in 1957, "We had no advance information of any kind .... The British-French participation also came as a complete surprise to us." 1/\*

On this point, Allen Dulles wrote

...there are also many occasions when an event has been foreseen and correctly estimated but intelligence has been unable to advertise its success. This was true of the Suez invasion of 1956. Here intelligence was well alerted as to what Israel and then Britain and France were likely to do. The public received the impression, however, that there had been an intelligence failure; statements were issued by US officials to the effect that the country had not been given advance warning of the action. Our officials, of course, intended to imply only that the British and French and Israelis had failed to tell us what they were doing. In fact, United States intelligence had kept the government informed but, as usual, did not advertise its achievement. 2/

A number of writers have said or intimated that CIA, at least, knew what was coming before it happened. Hugh Thomas, in his generally objective and thorough review of the crisis in *Suez*, says

But in fact it seems that either the British or the French secret services hinted to the CIA what their governments were planning on some level, high or low .... 3/

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\* For serially numbered source references, see the Appendix.

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Thomas footnotes this statement by saying:

It would seem likely that this was one consequence of the "Special Relationship"; ... perhaps the British secret service improperly passed the secret to CIA, who improperly kept it from Eisenhower.

Thomas goes on to say,

or, more likely, the CIA broke the British code as well as the French and Israeli diplomatic codes; this is believed to have been done at Griffis Air Base, Rome, in New York State.

As authority for this statement, Thomas cites "Private information ... cf. the claims by Allen Dulles in the *Craft of Intelligence* ...."

Herman Finer, in his ill-tempered book, *Dulles Over Suez*, says:

In Washington, Dulles [J.F. Dulles] was more worried about Suez than he admitted to the President and the American public ....

By October 19, somebody in his Department, perhaps also his brother, Allen Dulles, should have known that the French and Israelis would most probably attack Egypt - but the date given them was directly after election day [Nov. 6]. 4/

He footnotes this sentence by saying:

Allen Dulles claims that the CIA foresaw and accurately estimated the actions of Israel, Britain and France and gave the information to the proper authorities. [He then cites the passage from the *Craft of Intelligence* quoted above]. But he does not say when the estimate

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was made, at what date the information was given, the solidity of the information, or, above all, what use was made of it. His claim is dubious.

Finer goes on to say:

For both the State Department and the CIA had been apprised by October 18 or 19, at the latest, of the Franco-Israeli intention. The State Department was in possession of information of the kind I have mentioned from one of its unimpeachable sources by October 18 or 19. It was volunteered by a French Cabinet Minister, but not any of those I have mentioned, and not by the Minister of Defense Bourges-Manoury [proper spelling is Bourges-Maunoury]. Furthermore, on October 20, in the lobbies of the Assemblée Nationale in Paris, French deputies were whispering rumors of an Anglo-French invasion of Egypt and some phoned the American Embassy.

As for the second source of information, it was the French Secret Service. It passed the news, I am told, to the American "Secret Service" - which presumably means to the CIA. What is not comprehensible, if these reports are true, is the apparent apathy of the CIA and the State Department when the information was received. Perhaps, since the leak indicated the attack would take place *after* election day, November 6, the recipients shelved it while they concentrated on the election campaign.

One more writer is worth quoting in this connection. Kenneth Love, in his journalistic *Suez*, writes:

The CIA had picked up a good deal of information. Its chief, Allen Dulles, told me afterwards that its accurate forecasts of the collusive war were based largely on

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intelligence reports of the troops and equipment arriving in Cyprus, particularly the aircraft, which he said could have no other purpose than to attack. By 27 October it was common knowledge in CIA circles that Israel's mobilization was for war against Egypt. 5/

For this last statement he cites "Paul H. Nitze to author, 30 January 1964."\*

Love goes on to say that Chaban-Delmas, a Minister of State in the French Government, informed the US Ambassador to France, Douglas Dillon, that the British and French were negotiating with Israel for joint action against Nasser and that such action would take place immediately after the American election. Love says that Dillon sent a detailed report of the talk to Washington.

The writers quoted above, other than Allen Dulles, were not primarily interested in the question of warning, which is the focus of this chapter. Before trying to judge the validity of Dulles's claim that

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\* It might be noted that in October 1956 Nitze held no government post. Nitze informed the writer in November 1971 that Love, whom he knew, could only have completely misunderstood Nitze.

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the event was "foreseen and correctly estimated," it is necessary to point out that there were at least three phases which should be distinguished: (1) the basic objectives and broad intentions of the three governments; (2) the physical actions each took during the period between Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal Company on 26 July 1956 and the actual beginning of hostilities on 29 October; and (3) the planning and political maneuvering which culminated in the Suez hostilities. The record shows that the degree of warning in each case was quite different.

The Basic UK-French-Israeli Policy

There can be no question about US knowledge of the basic policy of the British Government. On 27 July Prime Minister Eden of the United Kingdom sent a message to President Eisenhower which read in part:

...my colleagues and I are convinced that we must be ready, in the last resort, to use force to bring Nasser to his senses ... I have this morning instructed our Chiefs of Staff to prepare a military plan accordingly. 6/

President Eisenhower sent Robert Murphy immediately to London "to see what it was all about."

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Murphy, in the day or so after arriving, saw Selwyn Lloyd, the Foreign Secretary, together with the French Foreign Minister, at which time the intention to use force if necessary was made clear. He also dined with Harold Macmillan, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and a power in the Eden Government. At that time, Murphy said,

I was left in no doubt that the British Government believed that Suez was a test which could be met only by the use of force, and I was not surprised at this reaction because it seemed not unjustified. I was told the French saw eye to eye with the British on the necessity of making a stand, and that they were prepared to participate in a military operation. 7/

Murphy, of course, reported his meetings to Washington. On 31 July, President Eisenhower sent to Eden the first of a series of communications attempting to dissuade the British from using force. 8/ It is not useful for the present purposes to go into detail regarding the various communications with the British on this subject or the steps which the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, took to head off military action. The only point to be made here is that the basic policy of the British and French to use force if they believed it necessary was known from

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the first days after Nasser's seizure of the Canal Company. So, in a sense, strategic warning had been given through direct inter-governmental communications. No evidence was found, however, which bore on knowledge of Israeli intentions.

#### Military Preparations

Given the knowledge that the British and French were preparing themselves for the use of force, the intelligence community took on the task of keeping track of the actual preparations. U-2 flights over the Middle East started on 29 August, having been authorized by the White House after the concurrence of the Secretary of State. 9/ There were four missions in August, seven in September, ten in October, and 14 in November. They covered the Mediterranean Basin from Spain to Saudi Arabia, with particular attention to the Eastern Mediterranean countries and islands, including Malta and Cyprus. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] These flights gave a good deal of detailed information regarding the French and British military build-up, as well as some information on Israel. On the last point, Eisenhower, in a memorandum for the

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record dated 15 October 1956 wrote,

Incidentally, our high-flying reconnaissance planes have shown that Israel has obtained some 60 of the French Mystere pursuit planes, when there had been reported the transfer of only 24. 10/

Watch Committee Reports

Perhaps the clearest indication of the detail in which the intelligence community was following the military build-up is found in the watch reports to the IAC of the period. In many cases, these reports had attached to them lists of significant indications bearing on British and French intentions to employ force against Egypt. 11/ They reported troop, aircraft, and ship movements, the alerting of military units, staff organizations and reorganizations, etc. No direct reference to U-2 flights was made in these reports; at that time the U-2 operation had just started and was held under extremely tight security. The take from these flights was probably covered in the items which were labelled Top Secret with COMINT codewords or were otherwise disguised. For example the watch report for the period 4 to 10 October cited, in its indications list, "Firm reports that Israel now

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has from 50 to 60 French Mystere IV-A aircraft.". That information almost certainly came from U-2 photography.

The watch reports and annexes led off with "conclusions" which were estimative in character. These conclusions addressed themselves to the likelihood, based on indications, of military action by the United Kingdom and France, and between Israel and the Arabs (as well as to apparent Soviet action). During September, the watch reports had annexes dealing exclusively with "Conclusions on British-French Intentions to Employ Force Against Egypt." The annex of 5 September said:

The UK and France are likely to launch military action against Egypt if they decide that their objectives are not obtainable within a reasonable time by negotiation or by other non-military means. 12/

The imminence of hostilities seemed to be less as the month passed. By October 3, the annex said that "Anglo-French military action against Egypt in the immediate future is unlikely" and the annex was suspended "in view of the preponderance of indications that the UK and France do not intend to resort to force

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at this time." 13/ Among the factors cited by the Watch Committee were the submission of the Suez matter to the United Nations by the British and French, the release of a British division from alert status, and "the absence of any evidence of British-French intentions to act against Egypt through Israel, despite various reported rumors to the contrary."

On October 10, the watch report said:

Deliberate initiation of full-scale Arab-Israeli hostilities is unlikely in the immediate future. However, broadened border clashes are likely and could expand into serious fighting. 14/

The report of 17 October repeated the same general conclusion while calling attention to the uncertain situation within Jordan and on its frontier with Israel. 15/ The basic judgment regarding Arab-Israeli full-scale hostilities was essentially unchanged in the watch report of 24 October. 16/ Indeed, the report had a footnote reading "In view of the receding danger of hostilities over the Suez Canal, the Watch Committee has discontinued its conclusion on that situation unless events dictate otherwise." (This was five days before the Israeli attack.)

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On 26 October, the Chairman of the National Indications Center, J. J. Hitchcock, sent a memorandum to the IAC reciting that the members of the Watch Committee had examined very recent reports and

generally agree that the likelihood has increased of major Israeli reprisals, probably against Egypt in the near future. It is believed that the present Israeli mobilization, though on a large scale, is not full mobilization, and therefore Israel does not intend that this action lead to general hostilities although it is preparing to meet the possibility of broader action. 17/

There was cited "An unconfirmed report that France may be planning actions in conjunction with Israel against Egypt." On 28 October, there was a special meeting of the Watch Committee to consider the "new evidence of heavy Israeli mobilization." It concluded that the various factors, such as Israeli mobilization, French material support etc., "provide a favorable opportunity for a major attack" which would indicate "the attack will be launched against Egypt in the very near future." 18/

A special watch report of 29 October stated that the IAC approved the findings of "its" Watch Committee at a special meeting on that date

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to consider indications bearing on Israeli military operations against Egypt and possible French and British involvement. 19/

The Watch Committee had found that the

scale and nature of the Israeli attack in the Sinai Peninsula was sufficient to precipitate war with Egypt [and] that Franco-Israeli collaboration probably exists in connection with this Israeli move against Egypt, *with at least the tacit approval of the British.* [Emphasis added.] The British and French are prepared to and probably will intervene with force in the Middle East as opportunity occurs in connection with the Israeli-Egyptian engagement.

The charter of the Watch Committee gave it the function of warning, and because the Suez hostilities had started, the committee, after 29 October, on instructions of the IAC, concentrated its attention on indications of Soviet intentions and actions. 20/

This much attention has been paid to the Watch Committee and its reports because it was the intelligence community body directly charged with the warning function. General Cabell, the DDCI, was its chairman, and his relations with Dulles were such that he can be presumed to have knowledge of any intelligence in Dulles's possession. All members of the community were represented and it was supposed to have available

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all intelligence from all sources. This included State and Defense Department cables, reports of the Clandestine Services, the analysis of U-2 photography, SIGINT material, etc. In fact, however, some very high-level State and Defense messages were not given to the Watch Committee. The Dillon cable of 19 October referred to below\* was almost certainly not given to the Watch Committee. 21/ If detailed warning had been given by intelligence, it would presumably have appeared in the Watch Committee reports, which were reviewed by the IAC and sent to the White House, among others.

The Current Intelligence Bulletin (CIB)

The various Watch Committee reports noted above were not, of course, the only publications that gave notice of the steps being taken by the United Kingdom, France, and Israel. The *Current Intelligence Bulletin* (as it was then called) carried a large number of items which were based on attache reports and communications intercepts, as well as regular foreign service and clandestine reporting -- including reports of men sent by the Clandestine

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\* See page 29 below.

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Services to Cyprus.) In addition, there was a separate group known as the PARAMOUNT Committee which was set up by the IAC on 5 September. 22/ This committee concerned itself with the evidence from U-2 photography but was, because of the sensitivity of the source, quite separate from the mechanism that produced the *Bulletin*. It reported separately to the Watch Committee, 23/ and also issued daily reports on the situation. 24/ The *Bulletin* during October reported a steady, heavy build-up of Israeli forces and a movement south and west of armor and other equipment. The PARAMOUNT Committee reported on 26 October that 40 British jet light bombers had arrived on Cyprus on 23 October. On the following day the committee reported the arrival of 18 French transport aircraft. Israeli mobilization moves in late October were reported by the US attaches in Tel Aviv and relayed by the *Bulletin*.

As has been said, the Watch Committee met on Sunday, 28 October, and concluded that "The [Israeli] attack will be launched against Egypt in the very near future." It was launched on the 29th.

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Intelligence Estimates

The Suez situation was also considered by the formal estimating machinery of the community. Immediately after Nasser's nationalization of the Canal Company, there was issued SNIE 30-3-56, "Nasser and the Middle East Situation." 25/ While it discussed various possible reactions by the Western powers, it did not suggest that any one course of action was more probable than any other except, by implication, that the British and French would do something, while Israel was unlikely to attack Egypt "at least during the early phases of the crisis."

On 31 August, Under Secretary of State Hoover requested a crash estimate on "The Probable Repercussions of British-French Military Action in the Suez Crisis." This estimate was indeed handled on a crash basis. The Board of National Estimates met on Sunday, 2 September; the representatives met on Labor Day, 3 September; and the estimate was before the IAC on 5 September. The estimate has a note on its first page:

This estimate does not consider the question of whether the British and

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French will take military action against Egypt. Indications that they may do so, however, are sufficient to warrant this estimate of the probable repercussions of the action if it should occur. 26/

For the purposes of this study, most of the estimate is not relevant. However, it did find that

we consider it highly unlikely that the Israeli government would take advantage of a British-French military operation against Egypt to launch unprovoked major attacks on the Egyptian forces in Sinai or against any of the other Arab states.

This estimate was bolstered by the argument that in the event of British-French military action, Israel would feel that others were taking care of its security problems without any need for Israel to act.

Shortly thereafter, Dulles requested that an estimate be prepared on the likelihood of British-French action. 27/ This estimate was approved by the IAC on 19 September. The crucial estimate was:

On balance, at this stage of the crisis, we believe that UK-French resort to military action is likely only in the event of some new and violent provocation - such as major violence to British and French nationals and property in Egypt - which would unite British public opinion behind such action. In such an event, the UK and France would probably use force against Egypt even without U.S. support. 28/

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The estimate took note of the strong feelings in the British and French Governments that Nasser must be eliminated and of the military buildup of both countries in the Mediterranean. It stated that there would be a great temptation to resort to military action in view of the unyielding stand of Nasser and the unlikelihood of his accepting any "user's association" mechanism which would limit his powers over the Suez Canal. Yet it found the inhibiting factors strong, including particularly the force of world opinion and reluctance on the part of the British public, both of which had been factors in getting the matter referred to the UN Security Council. It went on:

The attitude of the United States will continue to be of very great importance. The United Kingdom and France fully recognize that a resort to military force against Nasser without at least implicit US support would involve risks which they would hesitate to assume alone ....

It remains possible, though we believe unlikely during the period of this estimate, [during the next few weeks] that if the United Kingdom and France are inhibited from using force over the Suez issue *per se*, they might eventually take military action against Nasser in connection with other

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possible crises in the area. It is possible that other situations of friction -- the Arab-Israeli conflict or Iraqi-Syrian relations, for example -- might develop in such a way as to furnish an occasion for UK-French military intervention against Nasser.

This last contingency was, it may be argued, what actually happened six weeks later, but the estimate judged it unlikely.

Thereafter at its meetings on 2 October, 9 October, 16 October, and 23 October, the IAC considered memoranda prepared by the Board of National Estimates reviewing important recent evidence and each concluding that there was no need to revise the estimates referred to above. 29/ In each case the IAC discussed the matter and concurred in the conclusion of the Board of National Estimates. All these IAC sessions were presided over either by Dulles or, in a few cases, General Cabell. Thus through 23 October, the IAC estimative record was essentially that the British and French would not attack in the absence of some "new and violent provocation." The next regular IAC meeting was 30 October, after the Israeli attack had started, and the day that the British-French ultimatum was sent. It should be noted that the events which changed the Watch Committee reports

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happened after 23 October, the last date on which IAC reaffirmed the estimate. The Dillon cable of 19 October, discussed below, was almost certainly not available to the IAC members, unless perhaps to Dulles himself. At any rate, it did not warn of imminent hostilities.

#### UK-French-Israeli Planning

Thus the record shows that CIA and the intelligence community kept the US Government up to date on the military build-up of the British, French, and Israelis, i.e. on those things which could be physically observed.

The writer found no evidence, however, that indicates that US intelligence was aware of any of the various plans of action that were worked out by the British and French staffs as the instructions of the political leaders, particularly Eden, changed.

Anglo-French military planning started by 31 July, five days after Nasser's nationalization action. 30/ French General Andre Beaufre, who had been designated as ground commander of the French expeditionary forces, was in London on 10 August. 31/ The first plan called for bombing raids in Egypt on 13 September

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followed by a landing at Alexandria on 15 September. 32/ The plans of action were changed from time to time, and the plan which was finally put into effect -- the initial Israeli attack, the British-French ultimatum to both Israel and Egypt, followed by the British and French military intervention, nominally to protect the canal -- probably was not developed until shortly after the middle of October. 33/ There is no available evidence that anyone in the US Government knew of these plans. Their specificity might have led to the conclusion that military action was at least a probability and that the military preparations were more than a threat designed to force Nasser to be more forthcoming in the various negotiations.

Both the British and French Governments had it as a matter of firm policy not to tell the United States what was going on. Anthony Nutting, who was Secretary of State in Eden's cabinet until he resigned on 31 October over British action in the Suez crisis, goes into this point at some length in his book *No End of a Lesson*:

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From the moment when Eden decided to go along with the Franco-Israeli conspiracy, the most elaborate precautions were taken to preserve absolute secrecy, even to the point of misleading our friends and "enemies" alike ... Nobody was kept more completely in the dark than the President of the United States .... Thus Eden made sure that America could not intervene at the last minute to prevent our going ahead. 34/

As to the French, Prime Minister Mollet is quoted by President Eisenhower as having said:

If your government was not informed of the final developments, the reason ... was our fear that if we had consulted it, it would have prevented us from acting. 35/

Hugh Thomas writes:

The reason why the US was not consulted was of course that to tell the US meant to tell Dulles, who, as Mollet stated boldly in the Assembly on 20 December 1956, might have stopped us again. 36/

The deception of the British Government was so thorough that on the night before the Israeli strike, 28 October, Selwyn Lloyd, the Foreign Minister, lied to US Ambassador Aldrich. The latter reported his conversation in the following cable:

Lloyd inclined believe Israeli attack more likely to be directed against Jordan than Egypt. While he noted that Israelis apparently have a recent foray against Israel which they could use as pretext

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for reprisal, he unwilling believe Israelis ..  
would launch full-scale attack Egypt despite  
temptation to do so, in present circumstances.  
He also said categorically his recent conver-  
sations with French give him no reason believe  
French are stimulating such an Israeli venture  
.... 37/

There is no evidence that the CIA [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] was given any advance information or warning,  
despite what the writers quoted above have said.

Richard Helms, who was acting DDP in Frank Wisner's  
absence, recalls only having received some "emanations  
from [REDACTED] in August, but this was long  
before any plans had jelled. 38/ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 39/ He be-  
lieves that the "emanations" mentioned by Helms  
relate to general British talk that they would have  
to move unless Nasser's action was reversed. This  
was no more, of course, than was in Eden's letters to  
Eisenhower.

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Chester A. Cooper, who was the senior DDI man [REDACTED] at the time, was on very friendly terms with Patrick Dean, who was Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee. It was probably Dean who, on or about 24 October in Sevres near Paris, met with Israeli Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and French Foreign Minister Pineau and signed the agreement covering the joint action against Egypt. 40/ Cooper says that neither Dean nor any other British intelligence officer ever disclosed any part of British plans. On Sunday, 28 October, the day before the Israeli attack, the Coopers had a date for a picnic with the Deans. 41/ In the late morning, Dean called to say that he had an urgent meeting with the Foreign Minister and probably could not join the Coopers. Cooper urged him to call when he could get away. Early afternoon, Dean did call and the Coopers picked up the Deans in their car. Cooper says that Dean seemed very "up tight" to such an extent that Cooper asked him what was the matter, was it bad news from the Hungarian revolt? (The Hungarian crisis was contemporaneous with the Suez crisis.) "No." said Dean, "our problem is not Hungary,

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but we have a problem. It will be the Middle East."

This is the closest intimation which Dean gave Cooper. He later apologized saying that he had been under the firmest possible orders to disclose nothing. It is interesting, incidentally, that about a week before, Frank Wisner, the DDP, had been in London, and Patrick Dean had arranged a formal dinner in honor of Wisner. When the dinner time came, Dean was not there. It was probably just at the time he was in Sevres signing on behalf of the British Government the final agreement with Ben-Gurion and Pineau, referred to above. 42/

Cooper made an informal survey in 1957 to try to identify how many members of the British Government were privy to the plans for the Suez action. He concluded that only 14 people were,

including the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary ... one member of the Foreign Office (other than Patrick Dean), the head of GCHQ, the Chiefs of Staff, MI-6 and a very few others. Unwitting until the actual announcement were Sir Kenneth Strong, Director of the Joint Intelligence Bureau; other members of the intelligence community; and the British commanders of Malta and Cyprus. 43/

There was no British Ambassador in Washington. Sir Roger Makins had left on 11 October and his successor,

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Sir Harold Caccia, was coming to the United States by boat and did not arrive until 8 November. The British Ambassador in Cairo had not been informed. 44/

There had been at least one hint that might have been interpreted as a sign that the British were about to act. Walter Monkton, the British Defense Minister, resigned his post on 23 October, being moved to another Cabinet position. On 24 October, Eisenhower writes, a cable came from Ambassador Aldrich reporting that the afternoon before he had seen Monkton at a cocktail party and that Monkton had told him that

he had resigned his post not only because of physical exhaustion, as he had announced to the public, but also because he believed that Britain's use of force against Egypt would be "a great blunder." By 11:30 that morning, Secretary Dulles was in my office to discuss this piece of intelligence with me. 45/

Reference has been made earlier to the suggestion made by Hugh Thomas that the French secret service "hinted" to the CIA what the British and French Governments were planning and to the allegation by Herman Finer that the French service passed the news to the CIA. No evidence has been found to support these statements. James R. Hunt, Jr., [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] told the writer that no such hint or

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information was given to the CIA [REDACTED], nor was [REDACTED] aware of the various secret planning sessions held with the Israelis. 46/ The Watch Committee had access to the reports of the Clandestine Services and, as has been pointed out, the watch reports had at most, on 26 October, "an unconfirmed report that France may be planning actions in conjunction with Israel against Egypt." 47/

French-Israeli planning for action against Egypt had started at least by early October. General Beaufre writes that General Ely, Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces, had told him on 10 October of the fierce desire ("*volonte farouche*") of the French Government to act, and that, if the British hesitated, the French would act alone. 48/ By 9 or 10 October, the French Task Force Commander Admiral Barjot had given instructions to prepare a military plan for action with Israel which would assume the "benevolent neutrality" of Britain, meaning French use of the Cyprus base. 49/ Beaufre claims that, in a memorandum he prepared for General Ely at the latter's request, he [Beaufre] proposed the "new" idea that the British and French should intervene after the

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Israeli attack to "guarantee the neutrality of the canal." 50/ This was, of course, the plan that was actually followed. Beaufre also says that on 18 October he was told that the British would participate. 51/

Anthony Nutting has a somewhat different story. According to him French General Challe and the "acting French Foreign Minister" Gazier, [who was in fact Minister of Social Affairs (Labor)] came to Chequers, the Prime Minister's home, on 14 October, at which time Challe outlined a possible plan of action. This plan was the same as the one Beaufre says he proposed. Nutting says that after the meeting with the French, at which he was present,

I knew then that, no matter what contrary advice he might receive over the next forty-eight hours, the Prime Minister had already made up his mind to go along with the French plan. 52/

Eden went to Paris on 16 October to confer with the French Prime Minister, Mollet, taking Selwyn Lloyd with him. The next day, Lloyd admitted to Nutting

that Eden had confirmed his whole-hearted endorsement of the French plan and that further consultations would take place in Paris between French and Israeli representatives. He hoped that we would not have to be directly associated with these talks .... 53/

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Moshe Dayan wrote, in his *Diary of the Suez Campaign*, that the Israeli plan of action against Egypt was set by 2 October. 54/ Thus the Israeli plan had jelled by early October, French action seems to have been decided by the tenth of the month, and British participation by the 15th. (When Eden says in his memoirs that the British Cabinet agreed to the plan on 25 October, 55/ he may be technically correct but is certainly misleading.) No word of these events seems to have been received in Washington.

#### The Dillon Cable

Thomas writes in his book, "Dulles's papers make clear that their Ambassador in Paris (Dillon) reported France to be preparing for war on 19 October, but he did not know when hostilities would start." 56/ It was well known in the US Government that the French were mobilizing men and equipment; what was not known was the collusive agreement between the United Kingdom, France, and Israel. Finer, in his book, deals directly with this in the quotation at the early part of this study where he says the State Department had information of the Franco-Israeli intention from a French Cabinet

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Minister. 57/ Love identifies the Cabinet Minister as Chaban-Delmas, saying that Dillon gave him this information in 1965. 58/

The actual message from Dillon to the Secretary of State is a long one. 59/ It had no distribution outside the Department and was shown to only a very few high Department officials.\* It is worth noting at some length as it is clearly the nearest to a frank statement made by the French, and is so much at variance with what the writers mentioned above have said it was.

It started as follows:

I had lunch alone with Chaban-Delmas and during 90 minutes conversation obtained clearest expression of official French views on Suez to date. I have been on a basis of Personal friendship -- for over 3 years ... Chaban is a Minister of State in French Government ranking above Pineau [the Foreign Minister], and as such, has been privy to closest held thinking in French governmental circles.\*\*

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\* This cable, Dillon informed the writer in November 1971, was sent via CIA channels to insure that it would have no distribution in the State Department.

\*\* In a French Government, a Minister of State outranks a minister with a specific portfolio, for example the Foreign Minister, who, in turn, outranks a Secretary of State.

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It continued that Chaban-Delmas believed that the only real difference between France and the United States was one of timing; both thought Nasser must be eliminated, but while the Americans thought this could be a long-term operation over several years, the French considered it had to be done in a matter of weeks. The British also could not tolerate Nasser's menacing their oil supplies. It was thus necessary for Nasser to go or seriously lose face in the near future. There followed a complicated scheme under which it was proposed that ships using the canal would pay their tolls to the Suez Canal Users Association (SCUA); which would remit to Nasser only the amount necessary to operate and maintain the canal. Thus Nasser would not get from canal tolls the extra money for a dam at Aswan on the Nile, the reason he had given for nationalization.

The cable continued:

Chaban said that the institution of such a regime promptly seemed to him the only possible method of avoiding war .... I asked Chaban what would happen should Nasser decide that the percentage of dues to be offered him by SCUA was too small, and that therefore he would not let ships operating under SCUA use the canal. He replied that in this event United States ships would go around the Cape, and France and the United Kingdom would take whatever action might be necessary to keep the canal open.

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Chaban went on to say

that he well understood that it was vital for the US Government under the present circumstances to be absolutely sure that peace would be maintained through early November. France, on the other hand, could not allow the problem of Nasser to remain unresolved beyond Christmas at the latest. He said that France was fully prepared to meet the US requirements for peace prior to early November but felt the US should then understand why France and the United Kingdom would be required to act after that date. He suggested that an announcement that SCUA would go into effect should be made around November 1 stating that payments to SCUA would actually begin on November 10. Chaban said that he had told Pineau to talk to you along these lines when he saw you in New York. He said that Pineau had raised some objection, saying he did not feel it was quite diplomatic to talk so frankly but Chaban said he had urged him to be fully frank.

Dillon in his cable commented on this conversation as follows:

This information tallies closely with my earlier thinking, except for the additional assurance that French do not contemplate any military action prior to approximately November 10. Chaban insisted that French do not (repeat not) want military action and hope to avoid it. However, only means of avoiding it would be successful operation of SCUA which would deprive Nasser of any benefits from nationalization. If this is not acceptable to Nasser French are prepared to take military action. On other hand, from point of view of US Chaban felt that we should give full support to SCUA as it would be only possible means of avoiding military action. If we did not give such

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support and SCUA operation such as he envisaged it could not go into effect, Chaban indicated that there would be likelihood of disturbances taking place in Egypt of the sort that would necessitate military intervention by France and the UK. I feel that Chaban's views are accurate description of French Government policy in Suez affair as of today.

A day later, 20 October, Ambassador Dillon sent another cable describing a conversation on Suez with Maurice Faure, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

It reads in part:

Faure said it was clear that Atlantic Alliance was now in the midst of its greatest crisis. He said that France considered Nasser to be a mortal danger to her existence and that she could not permit present situation to continue much longer. He said it would be vital, immediately after American elections, to reach firm agreement on this problem. 60/

On 22 October, John Foster Dulles drafted and sent a cable to Dillon, repeated to London, which said:

I have the impression from your cables Nos. 1839 and 1853 that French Government feels our opposition to the use of force in connection with Suez results from an election situation and that we might not be as strongly opposed after election: I can assure you that the views of the President and myself on this point are basic and fundamental and I do not see any likelihood of their being changed after election. I do not know whether anything needs to be said from our side with regard to this situation but we would not of course want French Government to feel that we had in any respect misled them. 61/

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Thus Dillon's cables did not, as Finer alleges in the excerpt quoted above, tell the State Department "the Franco-Israeli intention." Nor did Chaban-Delmas, as Love alleges, tell Dillon that the British and French were negotiating with Israel for joint action against Nasser and that such action would take place immediately after the American election. Dillon's cables do not mention Israel. They do show the firm French intent to humble Nasser, and Chaban-Delmas said that the French could not wait beyond Christmas and were inclined to move much earlier. But he also proposed the SCUA scheme as the immediate target and stressed that the French hoped to avoid military action. While Dillon's long cable received no distribution, it is not conceivable that John Foster Dulles did not show it to or discuss it with the President and to his brother, Allen Dulles. Dillon informed the writer in November 1971 that he knew of no telephone calls by members of the French Assembly to the US Embassy, as alleged by Finer.

If General Beaufre, Anthony Nutting, and General Dayan are to be believed, the British-French-Israeli

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plan had been agreed to by 16 October at the latest. Either Chaban-Delmas did not know about the plan, or he deliberately misled Dillon; Dillon is inclined to think that Chaban-Delmas consciously misled him. In either case, his conversation with Dillon did not disclose the plans which had actually been made.

The information which President Eisenhower possessed by 26 October indicated that the Israelis were preparing for military action. He cabled Ben-Gurion on 27 October pleading with him not to start hostilities, 62/ and he did so again to the same effect on 28 October. 63/ When Israel attacked on the 29th, Eisenhower writes, it was "in the Sinai Desert - not in Jordan but Egypt"; 64/ he had expected any attack to be on Jordan.

There is no evidence that any information or even hints came from the Israelis. Israel had engaged in a deception operation designed to show that its movements were against Jordan. 65/ Knowledge of the real operational plan was restricted to a very few people, and Israeli security was tight and effective. It was only when large-scale mobilization occurred and

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movements of large quantities of troops and equipment southward began that the US Government had any intelligence of Israeli plans.

#### Summation

To revert to the purpose of this study, it seems correct to say that the US Government knew from the beginning the over-all British and French policy of retaining the alternative of the use of force if Nasser's exclusive control of the canal could not be broken otherwise. Intelligence kept the government well informed, and in detail, of the movement of troops and supplies. But it was not until two days before the Israeli attack that the intelligence community had the evidence to give clear warning of the imminence of hostilities and of French collusion. The British role was not forecast and seems to have come as a complete surprise. One cannot say that Allen Dulles's statement about warning, quoted near the beginning of this study, is wrong, since he did not say when the warning was given. But it is misleading, since it implies to most readers that the warning was sufficiently timely to have enabled the US Government to do more than watch the first phase.

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It is probable that only the clearest of evidence could have convinced the US Government that the British were engaging in collusive planning with the French and Israeli's, flouting what was known to be a strong US policy position. It undoubtedly appeared highly unlikely that the French would do so. Although French relations with the US, even in those pre-deGaulle days, were considerably less intimate than US-UK relations, they were close. Until there is incontrovertible evidence to the contrary, it seems clear that the estimators, the IAC, and probably both John Foster Dulles and the President believed that neither the British nor the French would act in direct opposition to a clearly and strongly expressed US position. Evidence that could not be explained in any other way did not become available until the last minute, and it is unlikely that any estimate or judgment not based on such evidence would have been accepted by the policy makers. For a warning to be effective, those doing the warning must be sure in their own minds, their warning must be transmitted, and the recipients must take it

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in. Anything short of incontrovertible physical evidence would probably not have convinced John Foster Dulles that the British and French were defying him.

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## Chapter 2

### The Missile Gap

In 1959 we had to contend with Senator Symington's repeated charges of a "missile gap" - the allegation of an alarming inferiority in the numbers and power of the missiles of the United States as compared with those of the Soviet Union .... By January of 1960 new intelligence reports narrowed almost to negligibility the extent of the Soviet lead .... Nonetheless, in the 1960 campaign, the charge of a missile gap remained a useful piece of demagoguery. But within a month after my successor took office, word conveniently leaked out the Pentagon that the "missile gap" had been closed .... The non-existent missile gap had been suddenly closed by unabashed partisan politics.

D. D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years*. 66/

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Sen. Stuart Symington (D.-Mo.) charged [in January, 1960] that the Administration has "juggled" intelligence data "so that the budget books may be balanced." He declared that the Russian-American "missile gap" is widening rather than disappearing as Defense Department officials have said .... Symington said the earlier McElroy [Secretary of Defense] estimate was too low and that even if the later intelligence data is correct, the ratio between ready-to-launch Soviet and American long range missiles will be greater than 3-to-1 for a "considerable length of time."

"I charge this Administration with using intelligence information in such a manner that

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the American people have been given an ..  
inaccurate picture of what is necessary for  
our national defense," said Symington.  
*Washington Post.* 67/

At no time during Dulles's administration, and  
indeed probably at no time during CIA's existence,  
has intelligence been so intimately and openly the  
center of a national controversy as in the case of the  
so-called "missile gap."\* The positive intelli-  
gence output of the CIA, specifically the National  
Intelligence Estimates (NIE's), were the focal point  
about which the debate raged. True, there were ex-  
ternal factors which raised the pitch of the discussion  
and which motivated the charges and countercharges  
exchanged. But criticisms of Administration policy  
and performance were based on the Director's estimates  
of the progress of the Soviet ICBM program.

Stated in its simplest terms, the proponents of  
the missile gap claimed that the Soviet ICBM program,  
as estimated in the National Intelligence Estimates,

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\* The writer, at the earliest moment, wishes to state  
his great indebtedness to an excellent study prepared  
by Howard Stoertz, entitled *Intelligence Aspects of the*  
*"Missile Gap,"* which treats the estimative record in  
considerable detail. 68/

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when compared with US programs and performance in the ICBM field, revealed a projected difference between the ICBM capabilities of the two countries so large as to put the United States in imminent mortal peril. There is no doubt that the impact of the estimates was that the Soviet ICBM program posed a formidable threat to the United States, despite the NIE's disclaimers of adequate evidence and the use of such words as "possible," "could," "probably" and the usual phrases to emphasize that they were not positive statements of fact but estimates of the unknown and, insofar as they were five-year projections, of the unknowable. The US ICBM program did not contemplate matching estimated Soviet ICBM capabilities for a number of years. In that sense, there were solid grounds for alleging that a missile gap was imminent. And those that said it was non-existent or the product of political exaggeration were wrong.

But, of course, the defense equation was not as simple as missile vs. missile. The other factors in the equation included reliability, accuracy and payload or yield of the competing systems as well as the

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existence of other weapons systems: the US bomber fleet, the Polaris submarines, the US IRBM's deployed in England and later in Turkey and Italy, the fighter-bombers in Germany, and also the intentions and policy decisions of the Soviets themselves. When these factors were taken into account, the argument shifted to one of deterrence, was there a "deterrence gap?" This subject gave ample grounds for the amateur or professional strategists, such as Albert Wohlstetter, Herman Kahn, Henry Kissinger, et al. to write long treatises with involved argumentation as to the occasions when enough was not enough. This form of amateur intelligence analysis will not be discussed in detail here.

The issues in the press, in Congress, and in public discussion were phrased in much simpler terms. Secretary of Defense McElroy admitted in 1959 that the ratio of Soviet to US ICBM's might be, for a relatively short time, 3 to 1; Senator Symington claimed in 1960 that the figures might well be 12 to 1 in 1960 and 9-1/2 to 1 in 1961. General Thomas S. Power, the Commander of SAC, said publicly in January 1960 that

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with 300 missiles -- half ICBM's, half IRBM's -- the Soviets could destroy SAC. It was this sort of simplified statistics that fuelled the controversy.

Both the US and the USSR had been exploring the missile field since the end of World War II; both had tried to get their hands on the German designers and scientists who had demonstrated their skills with the V-1 and especially the V-2 missiles. US intelligence had been following, as best it could, Soviet developments and had deployed elaborate electronic intelligence-gathering equipment in Turkey, Iran, and elsewhere to observe Russian activities at test sites.

The first formal National Intelligence Estimate on the status and future course of Soviet guided missile development was not undertaken until 1954, and resulted in NIE 11-6-54, published 5 October 1954.\* The importance of intelligence on Soviet guided missile development was recognized in the Agency; in March 1955, the Guided Missiles Branch of the Weapons Division of OSI

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\* For a detailed discussion of the complications attendant on the production of this estimate, see Vol. II, p. 37.

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was made a separate division. Dulles is quoted in the IAC minutes as saying in 1955 that

guided missile intelligence was national intelligence of the highest priority, probably of even greater ultimate importance to our national security than atomic energy intelligence. 69/

But the issue of the relative status of the United States and the Soviet Union does not seem to have become a matter of public concern outside the intelligence community at that time.

#### The First Soviet ICBM Tests

A convenient and suitable date for starting an account of the missile gap controversy is 26 August 1957. On that date, TASS announced, that

A super long-distance intercontinental multi-stage ballistic rocket was launched a few days ago ... covering a huge distance in a short time, the rocket landed in the target area. The results obtained show that it is possible to direct rockets into any part of the world.

The TASS announcement also reported tests of thermonuclear weapons at high altitude in such a way that an apprehensive reader could link the rockets and the nuclear explosions. Three days later General Cabell, as Acting DCI, appeared before the Subcommittee on

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Military Applications of the Joint Committee on..  
Atomic Energy. He said that

Available intelligence evidence does not permit a "black or white" assessment of this [TASS] announcement - either positive confirmation or absolute denial ... we conclude that the Soviets may either have actually fired a very long range ballistic missile without our having in fact detected it or they may have so far advanced their technology and testing that they feel fully confident of their ability to do so ... our estimates have concluded that the development of an ICBM has been a high priority goal of the Soviet Ballistic Missile Program and that it could be first operational in 1960-61.\*

At the time General Cabell spoke, the most recent NIE was that of March 1957, before the first Soviet test shots. The estimate said,

We have no direct evidence that the USSR is developing an ICBM, but we believe its development has probably been a high priority goal of the Soviet ballistic missile program. We estimate that the USSR could probably have a 5,500 n.m. ICBM ready for operational use in 1960-1961. (The first operational unit being equipped with prototype missiles). We believe that the USSR will seek to acquire a considerable number of ICBM's with nuclear warheads as rapidly as possible. 71/

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\* It was later confirmed that the USSR had conducted an ICBM test in August 1957. 70/

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The estimate had attached an annex entitled "A Possible Soviet Guided Missile Operational and Production Program." This program, it was said, should not be taken as the most likely or even the probable Soviet program. It was presented as "only a possible program, but one which is both feasible and reasonable." To show what was deemed "feasible and reasonable" at that time, it included, under ICBM's, "production of a stockpile of about 1,000 missiles between 1960 and 1965."\*

It was about this time that voices were heard that recur again and again in increasing volume. In September, a syndicated newspaper column written by the Alsop brothers, Joseph and Stewart (later by Joseph alone) discussed the apparent lead of the Soviets in the missile field and concluded:

Senator Symington might well be proved right in his dour prediction: "If the policies of this Government are not changed, it is only a question of time before we will lose our country." 72/

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\* Nothing was said about the problems of deployment, reliability, accuracy, etc. which, as sophistication about missiles grew, became so important.

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As part of CIA's continuing study of the problem, there had been convened in the early fall of 1957, a panel of distinguished consultants who went over the evidence on Soviet ICBM's and reported orally and in writing to Dulles on 22 October.\* Dulles sent copies of their report to Brigadier General Andrew Goodpaster, President Eisenhower's Military Aide, and to the Secretaries of State and Defense. In his covering letter, Dulles said that the consultants "expressed great concern over the progress of the USSR in guided missiles and related fields." 73/ This was a mild statement indeed. In their report the consultants said that they believed "the U.S. is in a period of national emergency." After concluding that the Soviets had an "orderly and progressive program" featured by a high degree of reliability in launchings, a high proficiency in guidance, and powerful rocket motors, they believed that "the USSR can have some (a dozen) operational missiles by the end of 1958."

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\* The panel consisted of Dr. George B. Kistiakowsky of Harvard, Lawrence A. Hyland of Hughes Aircraft, Dr. Robert R. McMath of the University of Michigan, and Dr. Francis H. Clauser of Johns Hopkins.

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The consultants went on to say

our high concern has resulted from our knowledge of the US program (acquired from our official military connections) and our comparison of the US and USSR programs. Although we realize intelligence has no responsibility for making comparisons of this nature, omission would not remove basis for concern. US experience in ballistic missiles does not match that of the USSR and in our opinion is lagging by *two or three years* [italics theirs] .... Your consultant panel believes, as stated before, that the country is in a period of grave national emergency and that it will only be by the most intelligent and coordinated efforts of all concerned over a period of years before such an emergency can be eliminated.

#### The Impact of Sputnik I

This strong language had undoubtedly been influenced by the event on 4 October 1957 which shook the United States, the orbiting of the first Soviet Sputnik. The traumatic effect of this event (followed in a month by the much larger Sputnik II) had an effect on everyone concerned with the Soviet missile program, the estimators, the politicians, the military, and the press. On the day after the announcement of Sputnik I, Senators Symington and Jackson said that this event showed the Soviet superiority in long-range missiles, blamed the Administration's economy program for the

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lag of the United States and asked Chairman Russell of the Senate Armed Services Committee to conduct an investigation. 74/ Since the report of the consultants had received no publicity, the Symington-Jackson reaction to Sputnik is the first public airing of the missile gap and the first appearance of Senator Symington as the principal Congressional voice in this matter.

The subject was, in fact, pursued by the Preparedness Investigating Committee (Lyndon B. Johnson, Chairman) in November 1957, before which Dulles testified. *Newsweek* purported to give Dulles's testimony before the subcommittee, saying that he testified that

Soviet Russia today has enough land-based intermediate range missiles - on hand and ready to fire - to damage or destroy almost all overseas bases of the U.S. Strategic Air Command .... Russia could, if it chose to push the button for World War III launch missiles [later described as air-breathing missiles] with atomic or hydrogen warheads from 500 miles at sea that would all but wipe out New York City (or for that matter, any other city on the Eastern Seaboard).

Seldom, [continued *Newsweek*] has a Congressional Committee been handed such a large dose of unvarnished fact ....

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Dulles [it went on] informed the sub-committee that Russia was not quite so advanced with its intercontinental ballistic missiles, although still far ahead of the United States. So far it had tested 4 (of which two were used to launch Sputniks) and was believed to be two years away from operational status. But, said Dulles, the United States must take into account the possibility that this estimate is in error - that the Soviets will get their ICBM into production sooner. Candidly he admitted that at one time the CIA was at least a year off in its timetable for the Russian IRBM's.

What bothered the Senators as much as anything was Dulles' statement that the "hard" information gathered by the CIA had, seemingly, evoked no response from the National Security Council. The intelligence agency, he said, couldn't get the significance of its data across; no one would listen. "They began to listen," Dulles added, "when Sputnik I went up." 75/

The above is not quoted for its accuracy, which on its face is questionable. It is cited as a good example of the way those who were crying doom about the missile gap and the press used each other to blow up the crisis. Dulles's testimony before the Senate subcommittee was in executive session; in accordance with standard procedure, only a few typed copies (in this case only three) were made of such testimony and the stenographic notes were returned to the committee

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for destruction. Thus a magazine piece purporting to quote the DCI must have been based either on an illicit reading of the testimony or on a report of the testimony given by someone who was present -- which a *Newsweek* correspondent certainly was not. Without comparing the news story with Dulles's testimony, it is clear to anyone who knew anything about Dulles that it was a false report. A statement that the Soviets had intermediate-range missiles able to damage or destroy almost all SAC overseas bases is in a sense a net estimate, presupposing knowledge of all such bases and their vulnerability. Dulles was very alert to efforts to get him to make net estimates and always made a point of denying responsibility for net estimates, claiming he was no expert on US capabilities. The most glaring misquotation is where *Newsweek* quoted him as complaining that the NSC ignored hard evidence. Dulles would never have criticized the NSC, meaning of course the President, before a Congressional committee.

No copy of what Dulles actually said to the committee is available. Agency records indicate that all copies of the transcript were returned to the Senate

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subcommittee early in 1959.\* There was discussion in the subcommittee on 13 December 1957 regarding the leak of information which had occurred, presumably as reflected in the *Newsweek* piece. Senator Bush (R.-Conn.) made a strong statement, but the Chairman, Lyndon B. Johnson, made the usual protests about his security and that of other Senators and nothing came of it. Included among the members of the subcommittee were Senators Symington (Dem.-Mo.) and Henry Jackson (Dem.-Wash.). The active role of Senator Symington in later phases of the missile gap controversy raises the question of whether he was the source on which the *Newsweek* article was based. This question cannot be answered.

The 1957 Estimate on the Soviet ICBM Program

Shortly afterwards, a new estimate, NIE 11-10-57, was issued on "The Soviet ICBM Program." This estimate

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\* A receipt for three copies of the transcript of testimony before the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee on 26, 27 November 1957 is in the archives of the Legislative Counsel. 76/

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is important in several ways. It concluded

that sometime during the period mid-1958 to mid-1959, the USSR will probably have a first operational capability with up to 10 prototype ICBM's .... ICBM's could probably be produced, launching facilities completed, and operational units trained at a rate sufficient to give the USSR an operational capability with 100 ICBM's about one year after its first operational capability date, with 500 ICBM's about two or three years after first operational capability date. 77/

While NIE 11-5-57 in March 1957 had, in an annex, given figures on programs which were "possible, feasible, and reasonable," it specifically noted that they were not estimates of "probable" programs. NIE 11-10-57, in December 1957, made the stronger estimate that the Soviets "will probably" have an initial operating capability (IOC) in mid-1958 - mid-1959, and "could probably" have 100 operational in a year later and 500 in two or three years. A program that had "a few, say 10," operational missiles as its starting point and moved to 500 was postulated to enable the production and supply analysts to have some concrete figure to work with. The figures were specifically said to have been

selected arbitrarily and we have not attempted to define them as optimum or minimal quantities. Although we have no evidence that the USSR

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is actually planning to carry out this specific program, this examination permits the assessment of the economic feasibility and implications of such a program.

It was a useful device to let the economic analysts consider the problems of supply and cost. But it had an unintended effect of setting up a program of a particular size which remained embedded in the estimates, directly or indirectly, for years.

The missile estimates are an excellent example of the fact that despite the use of estimative language such as "possible," "could have," "might have," "probable," the impact of the estimates depends little on such qualifications; the figures remain in the reader's or the reporter's mind and the qualifications fade. A defense of the large figures in the missile estimates until about 1961 can be made by calling attention to all the caveats and qualifications in their texts. Such a defense is technically valid but, as a practical matter, would not carry much weight with most consumers. In part this is attributable to the reader's unfamiliarity with the care with which estimators use their qualifying words. When an estimate says something is "possible," it

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means that the likelihood of its occurring is greater than zero percent (impossibility) and less than 100% (certainty) and that the estimators cannot cite even rough odds on its coming to pass. When the event is designated as "probable," the estimator means that the chances are about 3 to 1 that it will occur. The ordinary reader misses this distinction, which he would call a "subtlety."

Another factor is at work, and will be seen as affecting the positions of some of the principal actors in this controversy. This factor is the belief that in the case of anything so vital to US security as the Soviet missile capability, it is more than prudent, it is necessary to act on the basis of the worst case. This "worst case" judgment was buttressed, in some instances, by a belief that the Soviets were striving to achieve "decisive military superiority" over the United States in order to force this country to do its will. If this were true, the "worst case" became the most likely.

Why did the estimates contain judgments which later evidence showed were very wide of the actual

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facts? There are a number of reasons, and these are not stated below in the order of their importance, for their impact varied from person to person. As has been noted, the launching of the Soviet Sputniks was traumatic. It was not that the idea of an earth satellite had not been discussed at great length. The United States had announced the year before that it would orbit a satellite in connection with the International Geophysical Year (IGY). (As it turned out, the launch of this vehicle was delayed until well after Sputniks I and II and after the Army orbited the first US satellite.) But the Sputniks were of an unexpected size, particularly Sputnik II, which weighed well over 1,000 pounds. The Sputniks put life into the Soviet announcement in August 1957, referred to above, of the launching of a very long-range missile. Intercontinental missiles, which had seemed more of a theory than a fact, suddenly became very real when Sputnik could be seen over the United States. The reaction by the public, and Congress, was sharp. Even those who considered themselves more sophisticated, such as people in the intelligence community who had dealt with

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such things, overreacted and were inclined to credit the Soviets with more than they had in fact accomplished.

The intelligence community was moved also by the logic of the position it had taken on heavy bombers. In the earlier 1950's, it had been estimated that the Soviets would build up a sizeable fleet of heavy bombers -- the Bisons and Bears. When the expected production of these bombers did not materialize, one of the principal explanations given was that Khrushchev had decided to leap-frog the heavy bomber and concentrate on ICBM's. This explanation tended to make the intelligence analysts expect a large, urgent program which would tend towards balancing the strategic superiority which SAC gave the United States.

US intelligence did not know much about the Soviet program. the launch area at Tyura Tam had been seen by the U-2 since its flights in 1957. Electronic gear [REDACTED] could pick up, even if it could not understand, the SIGINT relating to the missile program. But it did not know much about the SS-6, as US intelligence called the first big missile. It did know

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that test firings to Kamchatka had been successful and two Sputniks had been orbited. It did not know the deployment methods the Soviets would follow. Some thought the missiles would be deployed in fixed sites, and some thought the sites might be hardened; others thought there would be mobile deployment. In fact, these theories could flourish primarily because we knew little about the missiles and nothing about Soviet intentions. Furthermore, the ability to use US analogy was largely lacking, since the United States, at that time had had little or no experience with operational ICBM deployment; and the doubts, problems, and disappointments which the United States had experienced with the somewhat comparable Atlas program were not communicated to the intelligence community. It was US policy, as publicly announced in the late 1950's, to deploy only a relatively few of the Atlas and Titan missiles, waiting for the solid-fuelled Minuteman as the principal US ICBM for deployment.

Later events showed that the first Soviet ICBM was quite unsatisfactory for widescale deployment. It was fuelled with non-storable liquid

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oxygen, and it was clumsy; an Agency officer who was intimately involved in the work on missiles at the time calls it "very complex." But the intelligence community at the time knew little about the SS-6, and the Soviets made no announcements about seeking second or later generation missiles, although they were undoubtedly working on them. Despite lack of evidence, there was heavy pressure on the intelligence community to estimate the future of the Soviet program. As Dulles wrote,

...great pressure had been put on them [the estimators] by those in the Department of Defense concerned with our own missile programs and missile defenses. Planning in such a field takes years, and the Defense Department felt that this was a case in which it was justified in asking the intelligence community to project several years in advance the probable attainments of the Soviet program.

As in the earlier case of Soviet bomber production, the intelligence community, I am safe in saying, would be quite content if it were not called upon for such crystal-ball gazing. But since military planning requires estimates of this nature, the planners say to the intelligence officers: "If you won't give us some estimate as to the future, we will have to prepare it ourselves. You intelligence officers should really be in a better position to make the predictions than we are." For the intelligence service to deny this would be tantamount to saying it was not up to its job. 78/

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So, with little hard evidence on the Soviet program, with no evidence on Soviet intentions, and with considerable innocence about the many complexities involved in deploying a satisfactory operational missile system, the estimating machinery did what it was asked to do.

#### Symington Visits Dulles

The next act in the drama occurred in the summer of 1958. On 21 July, Senator Symington came to Dulles's office and was briefed on the Soviet IRBM and ICBM programs. Apparently no record of that meeting was made. This is of no great consequence, as the 21 July meeting is important only as a prelude to the second meeting Senator Symington had with Dulles on 6 August 1958. At that time Symington brought with him a retired Air Force officer, Colonel Thomas G. Lanphier.\* This man had worked for Symington when the latter was Secretary of the Air Force in the Truman Administration and also when Symington was Director of the National Security Resources Board. He subsequently was a President of

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\* Lanphier was the aviator who shot down the Japanese General Yamamoto during World War II.

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the Air Force Association and was a vice-president of the Convair Division of General Dynamics Corp., the prime contractor for the Atlas missile. Obviously Lanphier had good contacts in the Air Force and had a direct interest in the rate at which the United States was procuring Atlas missiles.

Symington said that Lanphier had given him information on Soviet IRBM and ICBM progress which differed substantially from what Dulles had told him on 21 July. The Senator thought he should "lay the problem on the table" and had cleared the visit with Senator Russell, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Lanphier said that Symington and Dulles were the only people to whom he had voiced his concern about the relative position of the United States and USSR so far as missiles were concerned. Symington said he and Lanphier planned to talk to Henry Kissinger that evening.\* Lanphier carried most of the conversation. He spoke at length about both the US and the Soviet missile programs, in the latter case covering both

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\* Kissinger, who was on the Harvard faculty, also listed himself in *Who's Who* as having been a consultant to various US Government bodies.

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the IRBM's and the ICBM's. He said he spoke of the US program from personal experience; his information on the Soviet programs "came from people in the US intelligence services." "It became clear," says the memorandum of conversation,

during the discussion that he referred to people in the intelligence components of the military services, in the AEC, and in CIA. He did not further identify his informants. 79/

His remarks with respect to IRBM's are not germane to this study. Suffice it to say that he purported to have information about tests, production, and actual deployment wholly out of line with what the intelligence available to CIA indicated, the Lanphier figures being much larger and showing a much wider deployment.

So far as ICBM's were concerned, Lanphier said that 50 to 60 tests were carried out in 1957 (including 30 to 40 in the summer months of 1957) and another 20 firings in the first five months of 1958, for a total of 80 or so firings. (This contrasted with a total of six test firings which CIA had identified at that time.) Lanphier also reported he had been told that the Soviets had tested at least two missiles with nuclear warheads.

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Based on this record of firings, Lanphier believed that the Soviets were then (1958) establishing bases which the United States, to his knowledge would not establish until 1961 or 1962 and that thus the Soviets were "two to three years" ahead of the United States. He made one very valid point. He said

the US was going to fire 115 missiles [presumably Atlases] to achieve a production rate of six a month in 1960, and build gradually to eight a month in 1962. In his opinion, our estimate of 100 Soviet ICBM's operational in a year or so and 500 in two years was not consistent with the firing of only six ICBM's to date. Either the one was overestimated or the other underestimated.

Dulles said that he could not accept Lanphier's figures on test firings. Lanphier several times made it clear that his information was hearsay from people in the intelligence business, although he said not all of it was from any one source.

On 8 August, Dulles briefed the subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee which dealt with CIA matters and gave them the same figures regarding testing and the estimated Soviet program which he had given to Senator Symington on 6 August. Symington was present at the subcommittee meeting at the

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invitation of Senator Russell, its chairman. Symington was obviously unhappy about the situation. A man whom he trusted and who, he knew, had good contacts, had given him information at substantial variance with the intelligence estimates which Dulles was giving to the Senate committee.

Joseph Alsop, in his syndicated column, was warming up his role as the prophet of the missile gap. On 30 July he had given figures for the US ICBM program and compared them with figures for the Soviet program (figures which, incidentally were much larger and more positive than even Symington had used). He concluded that the Soviets would have 500 ICBM's "in place" against 30 for the United States by the end of 1960, rising to "2,000 against our 130 plus a few Polaris by the end of 1963." "No wonder they shudder at the Pentagon," he concluded.\* 80/

#### Symington Visits the President

At any rate, Senator Symington made an appointment with President Eisenhower. On 29 August, Symington

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\* Whether Alsop had been inspired by Symington or vice versa it is impossible to know. They knew each other socially and, as will be suggested later, it is difficult to believe there was not some collaboration between them.

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explained his worries to the President and left him a long letter in which he rehearsed in detail his meetings with Dulles, what he had told Dulles, and the latter's response. The point of the letter was that the US ICBM program was woefully inadequate.

....if the information contained is correct, we believe the planning incident to our weapons system, primarily missiles, beginning now and lasting at least into 1964, is so insufficient in this area as to leave ourselves and our allies subject to overt political, if not actual military aggression from the Sino-Soviet alliance - with a relatively slight chance of effective retaliation against such aggression between 1960 and 1962. 81/

Senator Symington, in a speech made later on the Senate floor, said that

Later, the White House wrote suggesting that I present this analysis to Secretary McElroy [of Defense]; and also to Mr. Dulles. These follow-up conferences were held, but the estimates as presented by Mr. Dulles were not changed. 82/

On 10 October 1958, Dulles sent to the President a long memorandum commenting on Symington's letter.

In substance, Dulles wrote that the materials presented by Symington and Lanphier

provided no basis for changing our estimate on Soviet guided missiles as presented to you and to the National Security Council and to the Committees of Congress as indicated above. This view is shared by the Intelligence Community. 83/

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No one in the intelligence community, he wrote, had information to support the figures of tests or of missile bases presented by Symington to the President. Dulles also referred to the fact that consultations had been had with qualified representatives of missiles contractors and key scientists which had found the formal estimates reasonable.

A number of things were going on in CIA and the intelligence community. As a result of a discussion in the USIB on 7 October, 84/ Dulles sent a memorandum to the Guided Missiles Intelligence Committee (GMIC) of USIB asking that GMIC make a careful study of a number of specific questions regarding the Soviet ICBM program. 85/ These included a report on the degree of confidence GMIC had in the estimate of ICBM tests, whether there was a reasonable chance of deception or concealment, how much progress could have been accomplished by tests of components of an ICBM system at the Kapustin Yar test range as a preliminary to testing the whole missile system, and what was the likelihood that the slow rate of test firings resulted from unexpected delays or difficulties for the Soviets, etc.

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GMIC made its survey and on 5 November sent a memorandum to the DCI which stated,

In summary, we conclude that evidence which would warrant substantive change in 11-5-58 has not been revealed during our re-examination except to eliminate the possibility of an initial operating capability (IOC) during 1958 and to emphasize the possibility that the 1959 IOC will occur in the latter half of the year.\* 86/

Since Symington had told Dulles and had written to the President that he had gotten his information from sources including CIA, the Office of Security was asked by Dulles to investigate. The most likely source appeared to be one [REDACTED] who had been in ORR from early 1953 to 1956. He had been in the Strategic Division which at that time had access to COMINT and he had a tendency to try to make much of this source. Those who knew him were not sure of his mental stability. At a later time, Dulles referred to him as a "disgruntled and somewhat flighty ex-employee." 87/ When he left CIA, he went to work at Convair where he had

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\* The Air Force believed it could occur anytime in 1959.

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the imposing title of Senior Research Engineer in the Operations Research Group, which probably meant that he was on their intelligence staff. It was clear that he was a friend of, or at least had frequent contact with, Colonel Lanphier. He also had access to classified publications at the Air Force University. 88/ It appears that Lanphier alleged that he had a "source" in ORR and a "source" in OSI. The Office of Security report concluded that Lanphier had no direct access to these Offices but must have received his information from [REDACTED] who did maintain contact with several people in CIA. Security identified the alleged sources and concluded that they had told [REDACTED] nothing and had been completely discreet. "[REDACTED] may have," the report of Security says,

attributed them as his sources on the mistaken impression that gestures, non-committal replies or silence on their part confirmed certain of his statements.

The investigation shed no light on where Lanphier got any indication that the Soviets had test fired 50 to 80 ICBM's.

It may well have been, however, that [REDACTED] told Lanphier that he had such information. His acquaintances

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believe he was good at fabrication. The investigating record contains a confirmatory incident. At a meeting of the Air Force Association in Dallas in September 1958, Lanphier asked General Power, the commander of SAC, if he had seen a report on Soviet missile trains in China, to which Power said, "no." Shortly thereafter, Lanphier took [REDACTED] to SAC headquarters in Omaha to see General Power. [REDACTED] gave him two reports he had prepared, "Soviet Ballistic Missile Railroad Trains in Communist China" and "Resume of Available Intelligence Pertaining to Soviet Ballistic Missile Deployment."\* When General Power challenged [REDACTED]'s report on the missile trains, [REDACTED] first said he had gotten the information from the British in the Far East but later admitted that it had originally come from Drew Pearson's syndicated column, hardly a reliable source.

It appears that Lanphier believed [REDACTED] and his reports (probably [REDACTED]'s two-year CIA service seemed to vouch for his reliability), and passed on the

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\* The Security report said these two reports had been carefully analyzed by CIA experts who concluded both were fabrications.

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information to Symington, and thus it entered the public controversy.

While the above events were taking place, the estimates machinery was producing a new paper on "Soviet Capabilities in Guided Missiles and Space Vehicles." 89/ It made no substantial changes in the estimate of the year before. It estimated that the USSR would probably have a first capability "with 10 prototype ICBM's during calendar 1959" with a possibility that it might be in the latter part of 1958. It went on to estimate

that the USSR has the technical and industrial capability to produce ICBM's, complete launching facilities, establish logistic lines, and train troops at a rate sufficient to have an operational capability with 100 ICBM's about one year after its first operational capability date (i.e. sometime in 1960) and with 500 ICBM's two or three years after the first operational capability date (i.e. sometime in 1961 or at the latest in 1962).

The estimate made it explicit that there was no direct evidence on preparation for production or deployment and that the figures of 100 and 500 were

selected arbitrarily in order to provide some measure of the Soviet capacity ... they do not [underlining in the estimate] represent an estimate of probable Soviet requirements or stockpiles.

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In other words, the estimate dealt with raw capabilities, not a probable program. This was the same kind of estimate as had been made in the past. While the distinction between raw capabilities and a probable program was quite clear to those who prepared and approved the estimate, it became fuzzy and confusing when put before people not used to the intellectual subtleties of the craft of estimating. And a statement of capacities could, under questioning, lead to an estimate of probabilities. At a later date, when Dulles was testifying before a Senate committee, he was asked, in substance,

You say you think the Soviets intend to have a big ICBM deployment, you say they can produce 500 in two or three years after their first operational capability, now don't you think they will do what you say they can?

And Dulles's answer was, "Yes, I do." This is the same answer that anyone worried about the Soviet strategic threat would be likely to give, be he Air Force, Senator, newspaper man, or plain citizen. Thus the impact of the estimate was very much the same as if it had forecast an actual program, and it is doubtful whether those who were responsible for producing the estimate thought otherwise. When, later, the estimates abandoned

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the capability-to-produce approach to deal with an estimated program, it became almost impossible to explain the distinction so that listeners understood. This created a situation in which the later estimates could be attacked as being based on "reading Krushchev's mind."

After the GMIC review of all the evidence pursuant to Dulles's memorandum of 9 October 90/ and a review by a panel of consultants, USIB issued a memorandum to holders of the outstanding estimate which downgraded even further the possibility that the Soviets would have an operational capability in 1958 and advanced from 1961 to 1962 the more probable date when a capability with 500 ICBM's could be achieved. 91/ It should be noted that there were no dissents either to the estimate or the memorandum.

Hearings Before the Senate Preparedness and Space  
Committees

1959 was an active year for the missile gap warriors. In the November 1958 Congressional elections, the Democrats had made large inroads into the Republican membership, taking away from the latter 13 Senate seats

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and a net of 46 House seats. Congress was about 2. to 1 Democratic and the prospects for the 1960 Presidential elections became brighter. Stuart Symington had been reelected to the Senate from Missouri and undoubtedly was affected by Presidential ambitions. Congressional committees, all controlled by Democrats, started early in the year to schedule appearances by Dulles, who foresaw that missiles would inevitably be brought up.

On 13 January, Dulles urged Senator Russell, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, to have an early meeting of his CIA Subcommittee so that he could give them a briefing, referring to the fact that he was scheduled to appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Armed Services Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee. The DCI also spoke to the powerful Republican Senator Saltonstall. 92/ It does not appear that this meeting of the CIA Subcommittee took place. It was probably anticipated by the meetings of the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, which met jointly with the Committee on Aeronautical and Space Sciences, Lyndon B. Johnson

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being chairman of both subcommittees and Stuart Symington an active participant.

Even before these subcommittees met, the fur had begun to fly. Symington, on 23 January, had launched his attack on the Senate floor by stating that the "Administration might be adjusting intelligence estimates of Soviet missile strength to meet economies in the budget." 93/ This charge was to be heard of again.

On 31 January, Dr. Wernher von Braun, the German missile expert who was in charge of missile development at the Army's Ballistic Missile set-up at Huntsville, Alabama, testified before the two Senate subcommittees mentioned above. He put the United States lag behind the USSR in missiles at 12 to 20 months. "This meant," he said, "that it would take the United States that long to catch up if the Russians failed to advance." 94/ If the Soviet Union continued at its present pace, he estimated it would take about five years and then only if the United States went ahead faster than present plans permitted.

"If we don't change our national approach now, how soon will it be before our position is hopeless?" asked Senator Symington. "It is difficult to put a

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time on it," Dr. von Braun replied, "but in my opinion it is a question of the next decade." Von Braun was generally regarded as the genius of the missile business. After all, his team put up the first US satellite, Explorer I, on 31 January 1958, a month and a half before the publicized Vanguard.\*

On 22 January, Secretary of Defense McElroy had testified before the Johnson subcommittees. *Newsweek* wrote, "The long-awaited 'Battle of the Missile Gap' began in earnest last week." <sup>95/</sup> McElroy had told a press conference at the Pentagon that there was absolutely no evidence that the Soviets had at that time even a single combat-ready ICBM and said that published reports that Russia would have 300 combat ICBM's in 1960 were "exaggerated." "The very next day," wrote *Newsweek*,

on the floor of the Senate, Stuart Symington, one of the most ardent hopefuls for the Presidential nomination in 1960, plunged into the

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\* It might be noted that the Preparedness and Space subcommittees had retained as a special counsel, Cyrus Vance, a New York lawyer who subsequently played important roles in and for the Government, including Deputy Secretary of Defense under McNamara.

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fray. --- "The Secretary's statements," said Symington, "are apparently based on a downward revision of intelligence estimates of Soviet ICBM capability for the next 3 to 4 years. Nothing could be more certain to lessen our chances of survival than to subordinate our intelligence evaluation to budget policies ..."

All this set the stage for an interesting appearance of Dulles before the Johnson subcommittees on 4 February, and it was a lively session. 96/ He rehearsed the evidence on testing and the estimates, including the 1957 Estimate. Senator Anderson (Dem.-N.Mex.) asked:

I think every evidence, including the fact they had an 800 mile one 3 years ago, would indicate that they can have more than 10 by 1960. Now where do you cut back down to these other figures and who cuts you down?

DULLES: Nobody cuts me down.

ANDERSON: Now who put you to the later figure? Who gets you to take the later figures?

DULLES: In agreeing to the estimates which I will now give you, I have changed, we have changed our position in the CIA somewhat because of the fact that from May of 1958 until the present time, to the best of my belief and I feel confident about it, they haven't successfully tested any missiles, and I changed my views when I believed the basic evidence changed. I do not stick to a thing because I have said it once.

Senator Symington intervened at this point and the exchange became lively:

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When I saw you with other people who know their subject, in July and August [with Lanphier] and again in December, we offered you what we thought were evidences of more testing.

DULLES: But gave me no evidence.

SYMINGTON: Well, we thought it was evidence. Let's not get into that.

DULLES: You gave me assertions. I want to make that point perfectly clear, but I will wait until you are through, sir.

Symington spoke of his letter to the President and there was a confused discussion of what had been said at Symington's meeting with Dulles. The latter was obviously upset by the insinuations that estimates had been affected by US budgetary policy.

DULLES: I want to comment very directly on the statement that you made ... that you were making an investigation to see whether the estimate had been changed for budgetary considerations.

SYMINGTON: I did not say that. I said I asked if it had been. I asked the Secretary of Defense if there had been any change in the estimate because of budgetary considerations. That is a proper question to ask.

DULLES: Do you want to ask me that too?

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SYMINGTON: I did and you said no, so I wasn't going to bring it up, but I will be damned glad to ask it if you want to hear it.

DULLES: I do want to hear it.

SYMINGTON: Then I will ask it.

DULLES: I say the implication that there has been any change, even the question that an estimate has been changed, out of budgetary or out of other considerations, I consider an insult to the Agency.

SYMINGTON: Well, I was told ...

DULLES: And I would not stay a minute in this job ...

SYMINGTON: I see now why you wanted me to ask the question.

DULLES: Mr. Chairman, can I finish?

SEN. STENNIS (presiding): Finish your statement.

DULLES: The integrity of the Central Intelligence Agency has to be preserved and if there is any Senator who feels that I am changing estimates, or any of [us] are changing estimates for budgetary, political, or any other considerations, that would be ruinous to the Agency and I consider a mere question as to whether that has been done a very, very serious matter and I hope that the Senator would be willing to withdraw even the question.

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STENNIS: I thought the suggestion was not that you had changed your estimate to suit the budget, but that the budget had been changed to suit your estimate.

DULLES: That I have no objection to, to that question, but I am afraid the question was put the other way.

SYMINGTON: Now just let me say this to you, that if I have any question about your integrity, I won't ask it, I will say it, I just want you to understand that, you see.

DULLES: Good.

After some more discussion of the "overloading" of USIB by military members, and whether the military members could overrule Dulles, the questions and answers assumed a calmer tone. Symington said,

I will say to you [Dulles] that if I hadn't felt that somebody had overruled your intelligence, your estimates, that I probably wouldn't have asked the question [to the Secretary of Defense], although I think the question was entirely proper, and I did not put the deductions on it that some of the newspaper stories did.

DULLES: You realize that the maintenance of the integrity of our organization, its freedom from political, budgetary, and other considerations, is absolutely vital to its existence.

SYMINGTON: I certainly do.

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DULLES: I think it is unfortunate that the impression has been created in the press to some extent that maybe these estimates were altered for budgetary or other reasons.

Democratic Attack on Administration Policy

The balance of 1959 saw a certain amount of press speculation regarding the missile gap, Senator Symington made some extravagant statements, and the lines between the Administration and its Democratic attackers in the Congress were clearly drawn. Secretary McElroy, made it clear that the

Administration plan was not to match Russia in ICBM's but to rely on a diversified delivery system ... as better suited to US requirements. 97/

The Administration plan was to concentrate on the development of the solid-fuelled Minuteman and Polaris missiles and not to deploy large quantities of the Atlas and Titan, which would be made largely obsolete by the former. This position was attacked by Democrats, those in Congress urging that the US ICBM program be substantially increased. Senator Symington, in an interview said, in response to a question, that the situation of this country relating to the Russians would be "hopeless" in five years unless the missile program were stepped up. 98/ By March 1959 he had worked himself up to

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saying to General Thomas White, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, who was testifying before the Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee,

Now, I want to make this prediction to you. In 3 years the Russians will prove to us that they have 3,000 ICBM's. Let that be on the record. 99/

This figure was pure imagination; no known estimate, formal or informal, professional or amateur, had ever reached a figure of 3,000 in 1962. Even Joseph Alsop had never gone higher than 2,000 at the end of 1963. Dean Acheson, who was in retirement, was quoted as having said that the Administration plan not to attempt to keep up with the Soviets in ICBM's was a "crazy program. This makes no kind of sense at all, it seems to me to be a national suicide." 100/ Joseph Alsop had, of course, been heard from. He trotted out the simile which he has used again and again: that not matching the estimated Soviet programs step for step was playing "Russian Roulette." Later in the year he was purportedly comparing the national estimates with the projected US programs. He pointed out that the estimators admitted that they had very little protection

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against Soviet deception (presumably meaning concealment). Even if there were no deception, and Congressional attempts to increase the budget for missiles are not

overridden for budget-first reasons, the missile gap is due to be very serious indeed in the years from 1961 through 1965 or 1966 .... If this is how Krushchev behaves now, how will he behave when the US-USSR long-range missile ratio is 10 to 1 in favor of the Kremlin. Apparently the Administration's answer to this question is "After Ike, the deluge!" 101/

Towards the end of 1959, the Washington Center for Policy Research of Johns Hopkins University prepared a report for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the general subject of the effects of technological developments on foreign relations. The *New York Times* reported that the document

cited the fear that in the early nineteen sixties the missile gap will pose the greatest danger to its security that the United States has ever faced. 102/

So an estimate which specifically said that there was "no direct evidence on Soviet preparation for ICBM production and deployment" but which said that the Soviets were estimated to have the technical and industrial capability to produce ICBM's, complete launching facilities, train troops, and establish

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logistic lines at a rate sufficient to have 100 operational sometime in 1960 and 500 in 1961 or 1962 103/, became one half of an equation which was said to portend a "hopeless" situation in five years, "the greatest danger to its security that the United States has ever faced," and "national suicide."

Later evidence, two years later, showed that the Soviet program was entirely different from the one the estimate said they were capable of having. But even today one cannot say that the estimate was wrong. No one can gainsay that if the Soviets had decided to deploy the SS-6 in quantity, they could have achieved the estimated rate. Yet, in another sense, the estimate was simplistic. It was known that the Soviet missile used non-storable fuel, which made deployment in hardened sites very complicated, while above-ground deployment would be highly vulnerable.

The US program called for the deployment of only a relatively few liquid-fuelled Atlas and Titan missiles, intending to wait until the solid-fuelled Minuteman could be deployed in hardened silos. Yet in the estimates there is no discussion of whether the

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Soviets had made the same sort of decision and were waiting for a second or third generation missile before going into a major deployment program. True, the idea of a second generation was mentioned in NIE 11-5-59 104/ as follows:

There is no evidence to indicate development of a second generation ICBM to replace that now being tested.

The long hiatus in the testing program in 1958 was not so interpreted, nor was such an interpretation suggested. It was not until the U-2 saw the construction of a new type of launch pad at Tyura Tam in 1960 that the idea that the Soviets might be waiting for a second generation missile was expressed.

As has been said, the intelligence community, in common with the Congress and the public, was swayed by the Sputniks, by the Soviet decision not to construct a large heavy bomber fleet, by the belief that by building a large number of ICBM's the Soviets could even, if not tip in their favor, the strategic balance with the United States. Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders boasted about their progress. Leaks and apparently indiscreet remarks by Soviet scientists and diplomats

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were calculated to enhance the picture of Soviet progress. The estimates correctly and carefully did not contain judgments as to what the Soviets were likely to do, beyond the generalization that they would probably seek to achieve a "sizeable ICBM operational capability at the earliest practicable date." 105/ Thus they lent themselves to forming the basis for the missile gap scare when the "worst case" of Soviet deployment was matched against the known actual US program. 106/

#### Change in the Methodology of Estimates

In the world of the intelligence estimators, a change in methodology was under way. It had become clear that an estimate of capabilities to produce was not adequate. As more thought was given to the theory of missile warfare, it was realized that the controlling factors would be the salvo capability of the Soviets; the reliability, accuracy, and payload of the missiles; and the hardness of the targets. Missiles that had been manufactured and delivered to sites would not be significant in either a first strike or a second or counter strike unless they were on launchers, ready to

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fire. Thus it was decided that the next estimates would deal with missiles on launchers and would deal in more detail with reliability -- both on launch and during flight -- and with the problems of achieving a significant salvo which involved accuracy as a key factor. It was also realized that as more evidence came in, it was necessary to address the question of what the Soviet program probably was, rather than what it could be.

The next estimates to deal with this question were started on their long period of gestation in April 1959; but the process of obtaining contributions, drafting, coordinating, and discussion in USIB took an inordinate length of time. NIE 11-8-59 was considered by USIB on 23 December 1959 and "the basic text ... (less the Annexes) as amended" was approved. 107/

It was not, however, printed, [REDACTED]  
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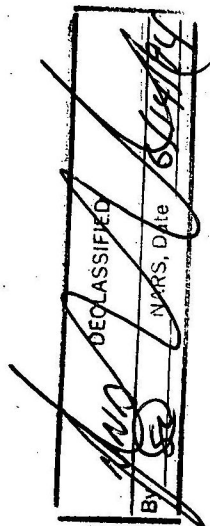
108/ On 12 January 1960, USIB noted a memorandum from the Board of National Estimates setting forth proposals with respect to possible revisions in NIE 11-8-59. 109/ Before an amended text was submitted to USIB, Khrushchev made a speech

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with a number of specific statements on Soviet military programs. This was one cause of the delay in completing the text of NIE 11-8-59. Another reason was that GMAIC\*, at the request of Dulles, was in the middle of reassessing the evidence on Soviet ICBM accuracy, a review which culminated in a report dated 18 January, which was discussed in USIB on 19 January. 110/ At any event, NIE 11-8-59, which had been before USIB since December, was finally approved on 4 February 1960, although it retained its 1959 number 111/, presumably because a new NIE 11-8 would be prepared in 1960. The importance of this chronology is that it shows the Dulles and the members of the USIB were fully familiar with this estimate late in 1959, long before Dulles, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the JCS appeared before Congress. Hence a discussion of the estimate at this point does not distort the actual chronology of events.

NIE 11-8-59

NIE 11-8-59, "Soviet Capabilities for Strategic Attack through Mid-1964," was an elaborate document with

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\* GMIC had become GMAIC on 3 February 1959 with the addition of the word "Astronautics" to its title.

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five annexes including "Calculations of Soviet ICBM Requirements," "Scale of Economic Effort for Certain ICBM Programs," "Economic Aspects of Probable Strategic Attack Programs," and two Annexes relating to long-range bombers. It still said, "We have no direct evidence of Soviet ICBM deployment concepts or of the intended nature of operational launching sites." 112/ It discussed the US targets the USSR would be likely to wish to hit, how the Soviet requirements varied with the degree of assurance of destruction sought, and the problems of achieving a salvo capability. In a rather backhand way it gave an estimate of 35 ICBM's on launchers in mid-1960. It concluded that "the probable Soviet ICBM program would provide on the order of 140-200 ICBM's on launchers in mid-1961."

While this was not a very wide range, it nevertheless brought differences of opinion. The Army and Navy opted for the low side of the range; State, Air Force, and the Joint Staff opted for the high side; leaving CIA, NSA, and the AEC uncommitted except for the whole range. For later dates, a whole collection of possible variables were mentioned but the figures

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given on the basis of stated assumptions were 250 to 350 in mid-1962 and 350 to 450 in mid-1963. 113/ The Air Force dissented from these last figures in a long footnote which disclosed a view of Soviet objectives at variance with the text of the estimate. The estimate stated the Soviet objective was the acquisition, by an active but not a "crash" program, of a substantial number of ICBM's to provide a deterrent and preemptive attack capability. The Air Force thought that the Soviets wanted more, i.e. the achieving at the earliest practicable date of such military superiority as to enable them to

force their will on the United States through threat of destruction, or to launch such devastating attacks against the United States that, at acceptable levels of damage to themselves, the United States as a world power would cease to exist,

or, in other words, "decisive military superiority." 114/

This Air Force position was greatly influenced by the views held by the successive Commanding Generals of SAC, Curtis LeMay and Thomas Power. They wanted very large numbers of nuclear weapons for SAC and consequently believed that the Soviet strategic strike forces would likewise wish large numbers of weapons. These men, while not controlling the Air

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Force intelligence position, had a considerable influence on Air Force views. 115/ The Air Force spelled out its position in numbers, saying it believed the Soviets would have 185 ICBM's on launchers by mid-1961; 385 by mid-1962, and 640 by mid-1963. Such numbers, the Air Force said, were not beyond Soviet capacity to produce. This was the first of the Air Force formal dissents, which continued during the next several papers. It is significant also since the Air Force view was unquestionably not kept exclusively in Air Force channels but influenced the heightened debate over the missile gap which broke again into the public print in early 1960.

This Air Force position had, of course, been strongly put forward during the drafting and coordination of the estimate. Early drafts of the estimate contained considerable discussion of what the Soviets would have to have in order to attain "decisive military superiority." This was a form of net estimate, since the argumentation had to take into account the US program, proposals for hardening sites, warning, etc. These discussions were dropped from the final form of the estimate, but it retained some aspects when it said, in paragraph 46,

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Our analysis leads us to believe that in 1961 the USSR would have its most favorable opportunity, through a rapid deployment of operational ICBM's to gain a decided military, political, and psychological advantage over the U.S.

Presidential Politics and the Speech by General Power

1960 saw the climax of the missile gap controversy. There were a number of reasons for this. Perhaps the most important was that 1960 was a Presidential election year. In the first half of the year, Democratic aspirants for the Presidential nomination were seeking to attract support; with the strong Democratic victory in the 1958 Congressional election, the party saw a reasonable chance of winning in November 1960. The defense policy of the Republican Administration appeared to be a vulnerability which could be attacked successfully. The attack was carried by Presidential hopefuls, particularly Stuart Symington but also Lyndon B. Johnson and to a lesser extent Senator Henry Jackson. *Newsweek*, in commenting on the defense debate noted that, "Only in the light of a Presidential year could the claims and counter claims be added up." 116/ While neither Symington nor Johnson had announced an intention to seek the Presidential nomination (it is one of the

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usual steps in US Presidential politics to appear, coy), Symington had said he would like to be President, though he planned no campaign; 117/ Lyndon Johnson's ambitions were well known and the press often referred to them. But the mere existence of an impending Presidential campaign might not have been enough to fuel the public controversy.

The Soviets made their contributions to the situation. On 14 January 1960, Khrushchev delivered a speech covering a number of military matters; he announced a major cutback in Soviet ground forces and bombers, saying that the rocket forces had become the most important military arm. He renewed his boasts about the Soviet missile capability. On 19 January, the Soviets conducted their first long-range missile test into the Pacific Ocean, 118/ a spectacular event which made a considerable impression in the United States. Although there was a general US tendency to discount the claims made by Khrushchev and other Russians, Soviet performance lent credence to the extent of convincing most Americans, including both Congressmen and estimators, that the USSR was taking the ICBM program very seriously.

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An important event was a speech that General Power of SAC made in New York on 19 January. 119/ In substance, he said that US capabilities to retaliate effectively to any Soviet military attack on the United States could be nullified "surprisingly enough" by not very many missiles. He went on to say that under existing conditions, with only 300 missiles, half ICBM's and half shorter-range missiles,

the Soviets could virtually wipe out our entire nuclear strike capability within a span of 30 minutes.

He referred to Khrushchev's statement that the USSR was already engaged in "serial production" of missiles.

Therefore, we must anticipate that the Soviets may have accumulated a sufficient number of operational ICBM's and IRBM's for an all-out missile attack before we have in operation warning systems which could provide reliable and adequate warning of such an attack.\*

The Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Aeronautical and Space Sciences Committee took up their joint meetings in the middle of January. Secretary of

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\* The importance of warning being that enough notice would enable SAC to get its planes into the air where they would not be vulnerable to such a missile attack.

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Defense Thomas Gates (who had succeeded Neil McElroy) and General Nathan Twining, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, appeared before them on 19 January. 120/ The subject again was the missile gap. Both Gates and Twining testified that although the Soviets might have more operational ICBM's than the United States in the near future, the size, effectiveness, and variety of other US strategic weapons systems ensured that there would be no deterrence gap. Gates in particular gave an explanation of the changes in the method of making Soviet estimates, referring to the change from estimating raw capabilities to estimating the probable Soviet program. He was referring to the estimate, NIE 11-8-59, which would not, in fact, be formally issued until 4 February. But as has been said, the essence of the estimate had been through USIB the December before and obviously both had either read the draft estimate or had been thoroughly briefed. Gates was probably not prepared to give an explanation. He was not very clear in his testimony and probably had the effect of confusing his listeners.

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Attacks on the Methodology of Estimates

This change in methodology presented to the Democratic opposition a point of attack which they took up at once. The idea of estimating what the Soviets were likely to do became transformed into "mind-reading." Senator Lyndon Johnson was quoted as having said,

The new optimistic picture presented by Secretary Gates is based upon guessing what the Soviet leaders may be thinking. The missile gap cannot be eliminated by the mere stroke of a pen .... We certainly cannot allow to stake the lives and the futures of 175 million Americans on the ability of some officials to read Nikita Khrushchev's mind .... Any rosy picture based on second-guessing Nikita Khrushchev can quickly turn blood red. 121/

*Newsweek* went on to comment "It was strong talk. Also - from a Democratic Presidential aspirant - it was partisan talk."

Hanson Baldwin, the pet Pentagon columnist, in writing about Gates's testimony and the estimates that he had referred to, said:

These estimates were not made public, but in an explanatory conference later, the Secretary got onto slippery ground when he admitted that the new estimates took into account what the Russians intended to do in missile production,

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rather than, as in the past, merely estimating their capabilities. In the intelligence field this issue of intentions versus capabilities is one of the oldest of pitfalls, and many experts have come a cropper by trying, in effect, to read the enemy's mind. 122/

The most frenetic of the publicists, Joseph Alsop, weighed in with a series of six columns, 23-30 January. 123/ The Gates and Twining testimony and General Power's speech gave him a jumping-off place. Misquoting Gates, he claimed that the Eisenhower Administration was playing Russian roulette with the survival of the country. He cited Gates as having said it was "absolutely impossible" for the Soviets to have, during the period of greatest vulnerability of SAC as described by General Power, the requisite number of missiles. (Gates, of course, had not testified to that effect.) On what did Gates base his assurance? On National Intelligence Estimates, which had consistently proved themselves wrong in estimating Soviet progress. The estimates, Gates had testified, were based on "mere calculations of Soviet intentions." Relying on belief in intentions had brought Pearl Harbor. "If the estimates are wrong no more than a hairsbreadth, something much worse than

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Pearl Harbor can now be the result." The CIA should not be blamed; it "has never claimed to provide gospel instead of estimates"; but those who press for "downgraded estimates and have then used mere estimates as gospel can certainly be blamed."

This ridiculing of the methodology of the estimates was of considerable concern to Dulles. He discussed it in USIB 124/ and said that he was making a speech in which he hoped to clarify the matter. The speech was delivered on 26 January to the Institute of Aeronautical Sciences in New York City and copies were released to the press:

Our intelligence estimates do not attempt to give a comparative picture or net estimate as to where we stand vis-a-vis the USSR in weaponry. We, in Intelligence, are not authorities on American military programs .... Our job is to determine where the Soviet Union now stands in the missile and other military fields, and where it is going in the immediate future. We are not in the business of passing upon whether there is such a thing as a missile gap.

It is difficult to predict how much emphasis will be given to any particular weapons system until the research and development stage has been completed, tests of effectiveness have been carried out, and the factories have given the order to proceed with serial production .... Consequently in our estimates we generally stress capabilities in the early stages of Soviet development and then, as more hard facts are

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available, we estimate their probable programming, sometimes referred to as intentions. "

The next day, 27 January, Senator Symington let fly a new blast on the Senate floor, with copies released to the press.

The American people are being enticed down the trail of insecurity by the issuance of misinformation about our deterrent power; and specifically about the missile gap. The intelligence books have been juggled so the budget books may be balanced. This is a serious accusation, which I make with all gravity. I realize fully that my statements on this vital matter may be labeled as politically motivated by those who prefer to conceal the facts; and by others who do not know the facts. 125/

Symington rehearsed his meetings with Dulles and the President and said that despite them, the December 1958 estimate had been adjusted downward.\* He then lit into the changes in methodology which had been described in Gates's testimony. They resulted, he said, in comparing Soviet intent with our programs, rather than Soviet capabilities. This change, he asserted, resulted in an impression that the missile gap had been much reduced if not eliminated.

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\* It contained, in fact, very little revision of the 1957 estimate.

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The facts are that a very substantial missile gap does exist, and the Administration apparently is going to permit this gap to increase .... Therefore, I charge this Administration with using intelligence information in such a manner that the American people have been given an inaccurate picture of what is necessary for our national defense.

John G. Norris, writing in the *Washington Post* commented:

Eisenhower Administration military policy was plunked squarely into the middle of election-year politics yesterday with an attack by a Democratic presidential hopeful and a defending round of politically sponsored speeches by the Pentagon high command. 126/

There had been throughout the country a series of "Dinner with Ike" gatherings, and indeed the Pentagon had gone all-out in providing speakers, including Secretary Gates, Deputy Secretary James H. Douglas, Navy Secretary Franke, and Army Secretary Brucker.\* All these men defended Administration military policy. All this publicity, of course, increased interest in the missile gap controversy, and was the background against which Dulles testified on 29 January

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\* Air Force Secretary Sharp had to cancel his appearance because of illness.

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Dulles Before the Senate Committees

Senator Lyndon B. Johnson had scheduled Dulles to appear before the Preparedness Investigating and Space Subcommittees on 29 January. The session was somewhat disorganized. Dulles had prepared a statement which would cover the latest estimate.\* This statement was never read for a rather silly reason. Dulles, arriving before the committees were called to order, had let a couple of Senators see it. When the formal proceedings started and it appeared that some Senators had glanced at the statement while others had not, Senator Margaret Chase Smith urged that all Senators be put on an even basis by being allowed to read the statement at a later time and that the hearings start with questions. It was so ordered. 127/

As usual, one of the chief questioners was Senator Symington. 128/ Citing the figures in NIE 11-8-59 he said,

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\* This was NIE 11-8-59, which would not be formally published until 4 February.

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What worries me is, and again let me emphasize I am in no way criticizing the Central Intelligence Agency, that as a result of many articles in the papers the people have the impression that we have eliminated the missile gap ... Now, based on the figures that you give us and and that we get from the Pentagon Building, the missile gap the middle of July is 12 to 1 this year and 9 1/2 to 1 a year from next July. Don't you think it is unfortunate, therefore, that this type and character of information has been handled in this way?

DULLES: Senator, I think that is for others to judge.

SYMINGTON: Now, Mr. Director, I have been very frank in assuring you that I had no criticism of information you have given .... Isn't it disturbing to find out, based on your figures and the Pentagon figures, that there is a gap many, many months from now of 9 1/2 to 1 instead of 3 to 1?

DULLES: I stick to my job of trying to report on what we can find out about the Soviet Union, and I don't deal with gaps.

SYMINGTON: I think you are a little hard-hearted this afternoon .... But my point is that General Power, if he is correct in what he is saying, [that the CEP of Atlas was 0.8 n.m.] it takes them to destroy all our deterrents, they could do that this summer, late this summer, with the number of ICBM's they have if their accuracy was as much as ours, could they not?

DULLES: That gets into war-gaming, and that is out of my field.

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SENATOR CLARE ENGLE (Dem.-Cal.): But the thing that troubles me is that I have been unable to discern anything in the things that you have said that discourage the validity of the statement made by General Power .... Now if that is true, we are in a very sad shape indeed. I would like to ask you whether or not my own conclusions with respect to this matter are right; that is, that there is nothing in the intelligence information that you have given here that negates the argument made by General Power. How am I, correct or not?

DULLES: Well, that is again war-gaming and I don't get into it. It seems to me to assume that we sit with our hands folded, and I don't believe we are going to do that. He indicates in that speech that if you have bombers in the air on alert, and so forth and so on, then you still retain a retaliatory capability, and I don't know whether he refers to naval vessels, the potential one would have in the fleet, and so forth and so on.

The press quoted Democratic Senators Johnson, Jackson, and Symington as saying that the Dulles testimony only confirmed the disparity between the United States and Soviet missile programs. They explicitly did not attack the CIA or the estimates; instead they aimed their fire at Secretary Gates's testimony that the estimates reduced this disparity. "My quarrel is with the use of the intelligence data rather than with what CIA is providing," Senator Johnson was quoted as saying, "the Dulles briefing had made clear that the

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Soviet Union would have an 'enormous advantage in missile striking power.'" 129/

Considerable agitation arose from a column that Joseph Alsop published on 5 February. It was entitled "The Dulles Testimony" and it stated

The hard disturbing facts and figures in the testimony of the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Allen W. Dulles, before the Senate Space Committee can now be revealed on undoubted authority. 130/

He went on to quote accurately the figures that Dulles had given in his testimony both as to the estimates of the number of missiles on launchers and on the evidence as to how many factories were believed to be producing missiles. He reported that Dulles had admitted that the estimates might as easily err on the low side as on the high side. He went on to compare the estimated Soviet deployment with the US program, writing in such a way as to leave the impression that Dulles had made the comparisons. He argued that the margins were so thin that if the national estimates were only a little off, the dreadful condition described by General Power, where the Soviet Union could destroy the retaliatory capacity of the United States, could be an actuality.

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This, he said, was the Russian roulette that the ..  
"business as usual" Administration was playing with  
US security.

The NIE containing the figures Alsop quoted was  
published the day before Alsop's column; it was clas-  
sified TOP SECRET. Dulles's testimony had been in  
executive session and the transcript was TOP SECRET.  
The publication of these figures caused great con-  
sternation. The Office of Security in CIA was asked  
to conduct an investigation, which it did. 131/  
A comparison of the Alsop article with the Dulles  
testimony and the NIE led to the conclusion that Alsop  
must have had direct or indirect access to the tran-  
script of the Dulles testimony of 29 January. It did  
not seem probable that anyone present could have quoted  
from memory, almost to the word, Dulles's comments on  
specific points made during the hearing. There were  
12 copies of the transcript: two for CIA, four for the  
Department of Defense, and six for the Committees. The  
Office of Security evidently found no basis for thinking  
that Alsop had access to the CIA copies; it was not  
within the scope of the investigation of the Office of.

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Security to see what had been done with the Defense copies. An investigation of the set-up and practices of the reporting firm that prepared the transcript showed that this firm was an unlikely source. This left the copies sent to the Senate Committees.

On 8 February, Dulles wrote to Senator Johnson as chairman of the two committees before whom Dulles had testified. He referred to the Alsop piece, to Alsop's claim that he was citing that testimony, and said that

much of the information disclosed could be of real value to the Soviets and this publicity is definitely detrimental to our intelligence work. 132/

Dulles wrote that he would like to discuss the matter with Senator Johnson to see if the source of the leak could be found. (It does not appear that any such meeting ever took place.) In accordance with the procedures specified by the White House,\* a copy of the letter to Senator Johnson was sent to Gordon Gray, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. 133/ The Office of Security investigation

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\* See Volume IV, Chapter 2, "Protection of Intelligence Sources and Methods."

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disclosed that Alsop had been identified as having been inquiring around the Senate committee staff as to where he could get a copy of the Dulles testimony, but no indication that he had any success there.

While the report of the Office of Security is too discreet to do more than hint, it seems to the writer that suspicion naturally falls on Senator Symington. The "missile gap" was his stock in trade in furthering his ambitions, quite aside from being a matter of sincere concern to him. Alsop was an ally in his long battle to bring the "gap" to the public notice. It would have been great temptation, at least, to use the good offices of such an ally to promote his cause. But, as with so many leaks, little comes of such an investigation. Even assuming that the source had been identified, what, as a practical matter, could be done? If the finger pointed to a Senator, or even the staff of a committee, what could Dulles do? It didn't take the sensation of the "Pentagon Papers" of 1971 to show that disclosures of highly classified papers can usually be made without serious consequences.

The testimony before the Johnson Committees, other public statements, and the press had left a highly confused

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situation. Senator Johnson called Dulles to testify again. He appeared on 24 February 1960. 134/ Much of the same ground was covered again, with Senator Symington trying to get Dulles to support his missile gap theory and Dulles refusing to get into net estimates.

Whatever the source, the figures in the estimate had already become public property and were cited not as an estimate but as facts. On 7 February the *New York Times* published a long summary of the "Great Debate," citing figures which were in fact those of NIE 11-8-59:

The central issue in the defense debate is the sufficiency of the US deterrent - now and in the future. The issue arises because of clear evidence that the Russians have superiority in intercontinental ballistic missiles. 135/

The piece referred to the fact that the subject, and General Power's speech, had been brought up in the President's press conference. The President was quoted as having said,

There are too many of these Generals (who) have all sorts of ideas. I have been long enough in the military service that I can assure you that I cannot be particularly disturbed because everybody with a parochial viewpoint ... says that the bosses know nothing about it.

The *Times* went so far as to compare the number of stars

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on the shoulders of witnesses before the Johnson committees; there were fifteen supporting the Administration, thirteen critical. It is of at least passing interest that Henry A. Kissinger, writing in 1960 said,

For all the heat of the controversy, it is important to note that there is no dispute about the missile gap as such. It is generally admitted that from 1961 until at least the end of 1964 the Soviet Union will possess more missiles than the US. 136/

As if the figures in the national estimate were not already being bandied about, Senator Symington threatened on 8 February, as reported in the *Times* on the following day,

to reveal the percentage increase in Soviet ballistic missiles that he said was forecast in the latest intelligence estimates .... Senator Symington's threat brought a sharp complaint from Senator Prescott Bush of Connecticut. Senator Bush said too many military secrets were being disclosed in the defense debate and that it was subject to too much political influence. Senator Symington, who is an unavowed aspirant for the Democratic Presidential nomination, replied hotly that "in a democracy the people have a right to know." 137/

All this discussion of the NIE figures was too much for the Air Force to bear. "Officials confirmed that the Air Force," reported the *Times*,

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had taken exception to the estimates prepared by the National Intelligence Board. [sic] ... The Air Force credited the Russians with a greater advantage than that conceded in the estimates that were presented to the Congress. 138/

General Walsh, Chief of Air Force Intelligence, was quoted as saying that he had dissented from the National Estimate. He and General T. D. White, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, were said to have testified that Air Force Intelligence had proved in two cases in the past to be more reliable than the National Estimates. 139/ And when the testimony of General Nathan Twining, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff was released, it was reported "He then

produced his own intelligence estimates of Soviet missile strength which differed from those presented by Mr. Dulles.\* 140/

This controversy gave nourishment to the political campaign. On 29 February, in the Senate, Senator John F. Kennedy spoke on the issue. He decried the idea, which had been expressed by Senator Symington on the

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\* When this was looked into, it was found that General Twining did not mean to give different estimates. He had been briefed by officers who had given him the divergent figures. 141/

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Senate floor, that the public had been "misled,"-but in general supported the Democratic attack. 142/ It might be noted that the *Washington Star* reported in late February that Colonel Lanphier

was quitting his business post so that he can criticize what he considers the inadequate defense policies of the Eisenhower Administration. 143/

Increased Effort to Obtain Intelligence

The shift in emphasis by the estimators from general Soviet capabilities to produce and deploy missiles to the concept of concentrating on missiles on launchers led to a further intensification of the already widespread effort to collect intelligence on actual deployment. The estimates had agreed on January 1960 as the date for initial operational capability, and NIE 11-8-59 had estimated that by mid-1960 there would be some 35 missiles on launchers. With this much deployment, it should be possible to find some confirming evidence. Nevertheless, a U-2 mission on 5 February 1960, which covered some 4,500 miles of Soviet railroads in the Volga River valley, had revealed no identifiable deployment. The pressure to continue and to expand U-2 flights was great.

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One location which had become suspect through COMINT and other technical collection methods was Plesetsk. One of the primary purposes of the U-2 mission flown by Gary Powers which was brought down on 1 May 1960 was to overfly Plesetsk. The importance of photographing this site undoubtedly seemed to those who authorized this mission sufficiently great to warrant the risk of flying it just as a summit meeting was to be held in Paris with Khrushchev present. Seeing such a site would not only confirm the validity of other collection methods but would also give the "signature" (configuration) of a deployed site and could lead to the identification of other sites which might have been missed in analysis of photography or might be in the early stages of construction. It might be noted that when much more complete photography was obtained in mid-1961 through reconnaissance satellites, Plesetsk was found to be the only site at which the SS-6 had been deployed. In fact, the U-2 never photographed a deployed ICBM. 144/

Efforts were made to ensure that the Clandestine Services were fully aware of the urgent need for intelligence on missile deployment. All the DDP

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divisions were briefed by OSI and the high priority of such intelligence emphasized. 145/ In August 1960, a collection guide and handbook on what was needed was prepared for DDP, and similar guidance for legal travelers to the USSR was assembled. In the Agency, a Guided Missile Task Force of both scientific and production specialists was set up in March 1960 to concentrate on the task of focusing the Agency's talent on recognizing and identifying deployment.\* Despite these efforts, no evidence of actual deployment was developed; the continuing course of estimating was not affected nor, of course, the political maneuvering as the Presidential election came nearer. It is rather ironic that Joseph Alsop found the news of the U-2 shoot-down encouraging in that he believed that the U-2 program indicated that the missile estimates had been based on "hard" evidence.

The next NIE to be issued on the subject of missiles dated 3 May 1960, made no significant changes.

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\* Under the direction of Edward Proctor, who had been Chief of the Industrial Division, ORR. 146/

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It continued to say

An exhaustive re-examination has failed to establish Soviet ICBM production rates or to provide positive identification of any operational ICBM unit or launching facility other than the test range. 147/

The U-2 flight on 5 April 1960 had, however, photographed Tyura Tam again and taken a picture of a new two-pad, road-served launch area under construction. While it was not known whether these pads were designed to be improved versions for the launching of the SS-6, this evidence suggested that a second generation of missiles might be coming along. So, cautiously the estimate said,

During the next few years, the Soviets will probably have under development a follow-on ICBM system, although there is no direct evidence that such a development program is now underway. We are unable to estimate when the USSR could achieve an IOC with a new ICBM system, but we would expect first flight tests to precede IOC date by some 18 months to two years.

#### The August 1960 Estimate

In August 1960, a new estimate on Soviet capabilities for strategic attack was issued. 148/ It differed from previous estimates in that it did not present a probable Soviet program, with ranges

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of estimated deployment, as had NIE 11-8-59, but rather it presented three "illustrative" programs, pointing out the large number of variables involved and noting that

the sensitivity of the computations [of Soviet requirements] to variations in the assumptions made with respect to them, render the numerical results too various to provide a reliable basis for estimative Soviet ICBM force goals.

This probably really meant that there was such a divergence of views that it did not seem feasible to make one acceptable estimate. In fact, the NIE gave one relatively low program, which represented the Army and Navy estimate, a medium program, which the DCI considered "the nearest approximation of the actual Soviet program," and a considerably larger program, which represented the Air Force view. Other USIB members had their own variations in between these programs. Even with these three programs, the estimate is decorated with a large number of lengthy footnotes which expound varying ideas about Soviet objectives and requirements. When the estimates for mid-1961 ranged from 50 to 200, for mid-1962 from 125 to 450, and for mid-1963 from 200 to 700, it was clear that no meeting of minds could be achieved. While a range of 140 to 200 was

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manageable as an estimate in NIE 11-8-59, a range of 125 to 400 was so wide as to be meaningless. Obviously, Dulles saw that in the context of the public controversy over the missile gap, the many leaks and the exaggeration of expression characteristic of a Presidential campaign, it was better to include in the text the widely differing views. It might be noted that the estimate still said,

we have no direct evidence of the present or planned future rate of Soviet ICBM production; as yet, we have not identified any ICBM-related troop training activities; as yet, we have not positively identified any operational ICBM unit or launching facilities ....

Lack of evidence, however, did nothing to discourage the creation of widely diverse and strongly held estimates.

All the members of the intelligence community had the same facts, or lack of facts. Community working groups and committees met to analyze such data as were collected. GMAIC had representation from all USIB members; NSA's take of SIGINT was available to all; NPIC had been set up as a community facility to engage in photo-interpretation. Yet quite different conclusions were drawn, to such an extent that NIE 11-8-60 contained three different ranges of estimates and 56 footnotes.

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The position of the Air Force is perhaps the easiest to understand. The controlling view in Air Force Intelligence was, as stated in a footnote in the estimate, that

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF ... believes that the Soviet rulers would endeavor to achieve a military superiority over the US ... which would enable them either to force their will on the US through threat of destruction or to launch such a devastating attack that the US as a world power would cease to exist. 149/

Having this viewpoint, and knowing the state and prospects of the US strategic strike capability (since the Air Force was responsible for strategic bombers and missiles as well as overseas airborne nuclear forces other than carrier based bombers), the Air Force would see every reason why the Soviets would create as great a strategic attack force as was necessary to demolish US nuclear capabilities. When the evidence was lacking as to actual Soviet production and deployment, it was only the part of wisdom, from the Air Force viewpoint, to expect that the Soviets were doing what was necessary to achieve decisive superiority over the United States. It was SAC's task to identify the targets for its own strikes against the USSR, and deployed Soviet missiles

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would be in the first category of such targets. .. Missing or overlooking a missile site could have, in theory at least, a disastrous effect. Thus the tendency of SAC was to give at least tentative validity to any scrap of indication that a particular location was a missile site. (More of this tendency will appear later.) SAC had for some years an elaborate intelligence analysis and production establishment for its own use at its Omaha headquarters, an establishment which operated quite independently of other mechanisms in the intelligence community. While the Air Force general staff in Washington did not dissent from the statement in the estimate that "nor can we positively identify any operational launching site, as distinguished from the known test facilities," 150/ SAC intelligence undoubtedly had a long list of suspect sites. Given the Air Force's responsibilities, it was only to be expected that it would tend to magnify the Soviet missile threat as a weight in the inevitable service competition for a large share of the Defense budget, particularly at a time when the Eisenhower Administration was trying to reduce Government spending.

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The Army and Navy estimate of the probable Soviet program was much smaller than the Air Force estimate, and indeed considerably smaller than that of CIA. Neither of these services had an analytical capacity competitive with that of the Air Force or CIA; they did not need it to carry out their missions. 151/ Their position, as shown in their voluminous footnotes, was essentially that there was no evidence of such a massive program as estimated by the Air Force. The Army in particular made much of the point that a program as large as that estimated by the Air Force would necessitate such an immense construction program for preparing sites that available intelligence collection means would have observed it. Activity at the test range, while it had been stepped up in 1959 and 1960 from the lull in 1958, was not, they felt, consistent with so large a deployment program. Furthermore, the Army doubted that the Soviets would consider it possible, under existing circumstances, to be able to acquire the salvo capability which would be a necessary characteristic of the decisive military superiority which the Air Force believed the Soviets were seeking. Thus, both the Navy and Army came

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down in substance, though not explicitly in words, on the side of the Soviets seeking an adequate deterrent capability. In figures, they proposed a Soviet program considerably smaller than that put forward by CIA.

CIA was, of course, not affected by the service budget competition. It was affected by the factors previously mentioned during the discussion of why the estimates were so much greater than what was later established. These included the belief that the leap-frog over heavy bombers to missiles could only mean a concentrated effort to build up a large missile force at an early date to counter-balance US strategic capabilities. CIA had done more detailed and sophisticated work on the Soviet economy than any other intelligence or research group and was satisfied that a large program was well within Soviet capacities. It may well be that CIA had made a more thorough study of the policy statements and decisions of the Soviet leaders than any of the Services, and took more seriously their boasts and threats. The State Department leaned more to the high figures of the Air Force estimate. State, of course, had minimum technical competence and based its view

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on its ideas of Soviet objectives and intentions... Dulles's own views are reflected in the CIA estimate. There were those on the Board of National Estimates and in the offices of CIA who were inclined to estimate a program no larger than that supported by the Army and Navy. 152/ Dulles did not agree with the extremists who thought the Soviets' objective was the building of such an overwhelming superiority that they could destroy the United States in a first strike. In his testimony before the Senate Committees he expressly repudiated such an idea, believing that the Soviet Union rather sought to dominate a United States that was in going condition and could be exploited, not a devastated desert. He was not anxious, however, to downgrade the desire of the Soviets to even or to tip in their favor the strategic balance. Hence a larger program seemed likely to him.

The mental process which brought the various USIB members to their several positions and their motivations are, at this date, difficult to discern or recreate. The variety of views expressed in the estimate being discussed is testimony to the differences in the estimates which are possible in the absence of

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clear and compelling evidence. For the purposes of this particular study, however, the important fact is that all USIB members came out with estimates that would keep the missile gap argument alive.

### The Presidential Campaign

Meanwhile, the Presidential election campaign was going into high gear. While the preliminaries which have been cited above would have suggested that the missile gap would play an important role, the contemporary records do not show that this issue was heavily stressed. It may well be that the news media were more concerned with the immediate maneuverings, the primary elections, the travels and moves of the aspirants for nomination, and of the nominees after the nominating conventions. At any rate, there is no evidence that the mid-1960 estimates were given the publicity that the earlier ones received. Even during the actual Nixon-Kennedy campaign which preceded the November elections, the missile gap does not seem to have been a major theme of campaign oratory. Candidate Kennedy did refer to it in several instances. Addressing the American Legion Convention, he said,

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no amount of oratory, no extravagant claims or vociferous braggadocio, no unjustified charges, can hide the harsh fact that behind the rhetoric, behind the soothing words and the confusing figures, American strength relative to that of the Soviet Union has been slipping ... we are moving into a period when the Soviet Union will be outproducing us two or three to one in the field of missiles -- a period relatively vulnerable and when our retaliatory force will be in danger of destruction through a Soviet surprise attack -- the period of the missile gap. 153/

Later he said in St. Louis,

I have confidence in our ability to close the missile gap ... to give this country the kind of defensive strength that Stuart Symington has been warning for years we will need if we are going to remain free -- 154/

And in his last important speech on 4 November, he said,

we are now entering the age of the missile gap, when our nuclear striking power, backed up by larger, more mobile conventional forces, may no longer necessarily convince the Russians of our capacity to survive a surprise attack and also be able to strike back at their willingness to fight. 155/

It would appear from these excerpts that Kennedy was primarily talking about the "deterrence gap," not the simplistic missile vs missile situation. Paul H. Nitze, who told the writer that he wrote the defense parts of the Kennedy campaign speeches, was certainly aware of the more sophisticated line of discussion.

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In the four television debates between Kennedy and Nixon during the campaign, the words "missile gap" did not appear. Candidate Kennedy did say on October 21:

Mr. Nixon talks about our being the strongest country in the world. I think we are today. But we were far stronger relative to the Communists five years ago and what is of great concern is that the balance of power is in danger of moving with them. They made a breakthrough in missiles and by 1961-2-3 they will be out-numbering us in missiles. I'm not as confident as he is that we will be the strongest military power by 1963. 156/

Nixon did not respond to this, nor did Kennedy push it further.

Theodore H. White's *The Making of a President, 1960*, which goes into great detail in describing the campaign, contains no reference to the missile gap. 157/ Other writers suggest that it was part of the Kennedy strategy to avoid a charge of being a "war party."

The only later NIE in 1960 which dealt with the general problem was NIE 11-4-60, which contained no new numerical estimates, merely repeating in an annex the figures in NIE 11-8-60 with the same footnotes. 158/

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The New Administration and the Missile Gap

The missile gap reappeared in the public view in early February 1961 in a most curious way. On 6 February, the new Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, held a background press conference in which he apparently said that he discounted the allegation that there was or would be a missile gap. The next day, the *New York Times*, respecting the background nature of the briefing, said

Studies made by the Kennedy Administration since Inauguration Day show tentatively that no "missile gap" exists in favor of the Soviet Union. The conclusion appeared to back the views of former President Dwight David Eisenhower who told Congress last month that the "missile gap" "shows every sign" of being a fiction. 159/

The following day the press reported that

The White House branded as inaccurate today reports that the Kennedy Administration had tentatively concluded that there was no "missile gap" favoring the Soviet Union ... The Administration was believed to have been sensitive to the reports because so much of the Democratic Campaign against the Republicans in recent years was based on the argument over a "missile gap." 160/

Pierre Salinger, the President's Press Secretary denied the report and said that the new studies were not complete. On 8 February, President Kennedy himself

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spoke to the subject saying that by 20 February he expected the Defense studies to be completed. 161/ Republicans in the Congress were reacting. They were demanding "that apologies be offered to former President Eisenhower" and the Republican National Committee's publication, *Battle Line* charged that the Administration "had admitted that the missile gap was the 'grand deception' of the political campaign."

Stuart Symington felt that he had to be heard. He was reported to have said,

If there hadn't been a calculated and deliberate effort on the part of the previous administration to prevent him [J. F. Kennedy] from obtaining adequate information as late as last fall - and I know what I'm talking about - he would be in a better position to tell the American people the facts about the missile gap. 162/

What he meant by this cryptic statement is not clear. It might be noted that by February 1961 there had been no new intelligence or estimates which severely reduced the probable Soviet missile program. The early US reconnaissance satellites, which first were operational in the early fall of 1960, produced no photography which proved one thing or another about Soviet ICBM deployment. Candidate Kennedy had been

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briefed on 23 July 1960 by Dulles on the ICBM problem and the then relevant estimates. 163/

President Kennedy's handling of the missile gap has been treated by various authors who have written about him. The treatment differs markedly depending on whether the author is trying to paint a favorable or an unfavorable picture. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., a leading apologist for Kennedy, writes

As McNamara began his review [of the military set-up] one fear which had affected the polemics, though not the essence, of the party debate on defense policy now dropped out of the picture. The idea of a "missile gap" had first been set off publicly by Eisenhower's second Secretary of Defense, Neil McElroy, who forecast in 1959 that the Soviet Union would probably have a 3-1 superiority in intercontinental ballistic missiles by the early 1960's. This estimate rested on the best intelligence then available and was shared by General James Gavin, who conveyed it to Stuart Symington, Kennedy and other Senators. By 1960, it was a staple of Democratic oratory. But new intelligence methods and sources cast doubt on the estimate in the winter of 1960-61; Jerome Wiesner had long been sceptical and in February, McNamara, in a candid background talk to newspapermen was ready to dismiss the gap as an illusion. 164/

And again in discussing the arms race and the Defense budget, Schlesinger wrote,

There remained for a moment the question of the "missile gap." Though disowned by McNamara in February, the gap had persisted as a center of

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intra-service [sic] argument, with the Air Force continuing to claim that the Russians had 600 to 800 ballistic missiles, while the CIA estimated 450 and the Navy 200. But on Thanksgiving weekend, when the President convened his defense experts for a meeting at Hyannisport, the weight of evidence was plainly against the Air Force and the issue finally withered away.

As has been said above, there was no persuasive evidence in the winter of 1960-61 which cast doubt on previous estimates. The Thanksgiving meeting referred to by Schlesinger must have been in 1961, when there was new evidence, but to say that "the issue finally withered away" is somewhat of an exaggeration. It is true that new factors had changed the equation by early 1961, but they were factors on the US side. The first Polaris submarine became operational in the fall of 1960. Deployment of US ICBM's had started. In February 1961, the *New York Times* had reported that there were sixteen Atlases and two Polaris submarines operational. 165/ Hanson Baldwin, at about the same time, said that

The United States has, officially, nine Atlas missiles in operational status, but there are at least nine more ready or about ready, and others scheduled to come in later this year. 166/

This rather guarded language reflected the uncertainty about the reliability of these early Atlas missiles.

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Nevertheless in matching numbers with the Soviets, and undoubtedly in Soviet eyes, these early missiles were a threat even of unknown quality. In any event, the missile gap, in the sense of the comparison of the strategic strike capabilities of the United States and USSR, had changed from the time when the United States had virtually no missile capabilities in being.

Victor Lasky in his *JFK, the Man and the Myth*, a book very critical of Kennedy, wrote

18 days after Kennedy took office, McNamara gave a background briefing to certain correspondents who wrote the missile gap was non-existent. Republicans, still indignant over their claim that the election had been "stolen" now charged that the missile gap was the "grand deception" of the 1960 campaign. "It took only 18 days to close it," said Hugh Scott. 167/

Lasky quotes the late Fulton Lewis (an arch-conservative radio commentator)

Candidate Kennedy spoke with every outward assurance and gave the clear impression of certain knowledge of a missile gap in order to be elected President. GOP spokesmen have failed to charge Kennedy with this unforgivable irresponsibility which placed personal ambition high above the requirements of truth and the national interest.

It is highly doubtful that the election results were affected in any material way by the Democratic

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charges that the Eisenhower Administration had headed the US defense posture into a position of strategic inferiority to the USSR. It would have been too much to expect a candidate who was trying to oust an incumbent party to forego using an issue which had had so much publicity. But it does not appear that the issue was emphasized. While the close outcome of the election made many Republicans claim that they had been "robbed,"\* neither side could or did convincingly claim that the missile gap was the cause or even an important factor.

New Evidence on the Soviet ICBM Program

The spring and summer of 1961 brought the first good evidence that deflated the estimates of the Soviet missile program. In May 1961, there was issued a report covering the comments of Oleg Penkovskiy, a senior Soviet defector, on the Soviet ICBM program. 168/  
The headnote to the report reads,

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\* Kennedy's popular vote exceeded Nixon's by only about 120,000 out of more than 68 million, though the electoral vote was 303 to 219.

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When source was asked to comment on various statements by Khrushchev regarding Soviet ICBM tests, production, deployment and threats, he replied that it was only bluff on the part of Khrushchev.

The purpose of the statements, Penkovskiy said, was

to force Western government leaders and military people to do their planning on the assumption that the Soviet Union already has a tremendous military potential when in reality it is only being developed .... The USSR does not have the capability of firing one or two ... there are not hundreds even in a testing status. There may be only tens in that category .... Even now it may be possible that somewhere in the Far East or at Kapustin Yar there may be some missiles which could reach other continents and detonate with an atomic, even hydrogen explosion, but such launchings would be completely unplanned, uncontrolled, and certainly not of a mass variety. Of this I am entirely sure, but in two or three years there will be a different picture.

Although this one source would not have made a drastic change in the estimates, there was other evidence.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] two different follow-on vehicles were being tested. While it was not immediately recognized that these were new types of ICBM's, this was considered a possibility in an NIE completed in June 1961. 169/ This NIE exhibited many of the characteristics of the NIE of the previous August.

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There was no sign of unanimity on the subject of the Soviet ICBM program. Instead of stating three "illustrative" programs and having the USIB members state their preferences, this estimate gave one program, the CIA estimate, followed by paragraphs stating the differing estimates of State, Army and Navy, and the Air Force. These paragraphs were not dissenting footnotes but were integral parts of the text. Even the CIA position was stated in terms of a range of numbers: e.g., 50-100 operational ICBM launchers in mid-1961, 100-200 in 1962, 150-300 in 1963, and 200-400 in mid-1964. State wrote long paragraphs explaining its preference for presenting both possible and probable figures; e.g., possible in mid-1961, 200; probable, 75-125, etc. The Army and Navy estimates were lower than the CIA estimate, those of the Air Force were considerably higher. It might be noted that in general the estimates of probable deployment were lower than they had been the previous August. Another point CIA estimated that two to four ICBM site-complexes were operational, with four to six launchers at each site-complex. Army and Navy disagreed, doubting that there was any such deployment, while the

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Air Force believed there were 10 to 15 complexes and suspected at least 20 more.

Detailed discussion of this estimate is not warranted as it was soon overtaken by new evidence. Reconnaissance satellites in June and July 1961 provided the first good coverage of many suspected areas. Sherman Kent, Chairman of the Board of National Estimates, addressed a memorandum to Dulles on 28 June 1961, which said, in part,

[REDACTED] Mission 9017 (17-19 June 1961) is the most important breakthrough into the Soviet long range ballistic missile program since the acquisition of radar coverage of test range firings and [REDACTED] [U-2] coverage of test range installation some years ago. 170/

That mission, aside from providing much evidence on MRBM and IRBM deployment, gave

the first firm identification of a Soviet ICBM deployment site-complex, in a soft configuration which strongly resembles test range installations.

It also showed another complex under construction which was probably for a second-generation ICBM. Another satellite on 8-9 July provided more intelligence relevant to the ICBM deployment program.

On 21 September 1961, NIE 11-8/1-61 was issued to supplement the NIE of June 1961. 171/ The estimates of Soviet deployment of ICBM's were drastically reduced.

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The estimate was that the Soviets then had 10 to 25  
launchers operational

and that this force level will not increase markedly during the months immediately ahead .... The low present and near-term ICBM force level probably results chiefly from a Soviet decision to deploy only a small force of the cumbersome, first generation ICBM's, and to press the development of a smaller, second generation system .... Soviet ICBM strength will probably not increase substantially until the new missile is ready for operational use, probably sometime in the latter half of 1962. After this point, we anticipate that the number of operational launchers will begin to increase significantly. On this basis, we estimate that the force level in mid-1963 will approximate 75-125 operational ICBM launchers.

Only the Air Force dissented, all other USIB members were in agreement. The Air Force believed the USSR had about 50 operational ICBM launchers in mid-1961, would have about 100 in mid-1962, and about 250 in mid-1963. This deployment the Air Force held, made use of the first-generation missile, which would continue to be deployed until the second generation was operational. To all intents and purposes, however, the "missile gap" was dead, particularly as the rapid progress made by the United States in deploying its own missiles counteracted fear of the Soviet program.

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So far as the public was concerned, the formal obituary was pronounced by the *New York Times* in an editorial on 27 November. 172/ Disregarding the fact that the *Times* had been an active publicist for the missile gap, both in its editorials and in the play it had given to news stories on the subject, it pronounced

The "missile gap," like the "bomber gap" before it, is now being consigned to the limbo of synthetic issues, where it always belonged. The "missile gap" - the prediction of an overwhelming Soviet superiority in intercontinental ballistic missiles in the early Nineteen Sixties - was the product of partisan politics and service (primarily Air Force) pressures. The same forces and the same Congressional and journalistic mouth-pieces who manufactured an alleged bomber gap in the Nineteen Fifties sponsored, and indeed invented, the alleged missile gap in the Nineteen Sixties. Today, judged by the hard-bitten estimates of actual Soviet strength, to which all the services apparently subscribe, the "missile gap" has vanished; the quantitative advantage, if any, is on the side of the United States.

The issue became one in part because Air Force intelligence estimates of Soviet Missile capabilities, which were always far higher than other estimates, were used as political and propaganda footballs. The Air Force thought it had a good lever with which to pry more money out of the Administration and Congress. The Republicans, needlessly on the defensive, got a bad case of foot-in-mouth disease. The Democrats, then on the political out, used the

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alleged "missile gap" as a club with which to belabor the Administration. The result was that a ghost, a shadow, became a synthetic issue which obscured real national defense problems and confused the voter.

#### SAC's Last Stand

The vestiges of the controversy had not, however, disappeared in the intelligence community. While Air Force intelligence in Washington probably accepted the analysis and evidence of the September 1961 estimate, 173/ SAC did not. It clung to the idea that there were many more missile sites in the USSR than were estimated in the NIE. In September 1961, there was a conference at the White House between the President and Generals Thomas Power (in command of SAC), Lemnitzer (Chairman of the JCS), and Maxwell Taylor. At that time, General Power expressed his profound disagreement with the September NIE. He was invited to express his views in writing. 174/ He did so and his memorandum was sent by General Lemnitzer, through whom it had been routed, to USIB for comment. This memorandum was described as a "polemic" and difficult to deal with. A USIB working group prepared a comment which was approved by USIB unanimously on 2 October. 175/ The USIB-approved

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memorandum in essence dismissed the arguments of SAC and reaffirmed the estimate.

SAC came back in a few days with a rejoinder to the USIB paper in which it claimed that KH photography was not adequate - no matter how good its quality - to negate the existence of ICBM sites in suspected areas and that ICBM sites could be of any configuration and thus not recognizable. Both these claims were contrary to the USIB approved assessment. Again the JCS asked for USIB's comments on the rejoinder. Special USIB sub-committees made a reanalysis of the utility of KH photography, the scale of coverage and of all the suspected sites listed by SAC. On 16 November, USIB unanimously reaffirmed the September NIE. 176/ SAC representatives were present at the USIB meetings which considered the comments on the SAC papers.

In January 1962, there was a show-down meeting at SAC in Omaha. The DCI, Mr. McCone; General Maxwell Taylor; Gordon Gray of PFIAB, the President's Board; General Carroll, Director of DIA; and several CIA representatives met with General Power and his supporting staff. There was detailed argument about

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specific sites. Taylor and McCone concluded that SAC had a position but not the evidence. In fact, the course of the argument showed that a number of sites mentioned by SAC had no support in any evidence. 177/ As a result of this meeting, a CIA-DIA task force was set up to meet frequently with SAC officers to go over all suspected sites. This exercise continued until May 1962. In the course of preparing NIE 11-8-62, the Hyland panel in June went over all the evidence and accepted the community view, rejecting SAC's estimates. One useful result of this whole controversy was that the SAC analysts and those of the rest of the community established good relations and, at the working level, an approximation of a meeting of minds.

One last word might be said about Stuart Symington. In the 15 February 1962 issue of the *Reporter Magazine*, he published a piece "Where the Missile Gap Went." He rehearsed his part in the controversy and named the various high officials who believed there was a gap. He gave the various estimates of Soviet missiles contained in the NIE's, citing them in terms of percentages of the 1958 estimate rather than in absolute

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figures, attacked the concept of estimating probable programs, which he called "guessing intent," rather than sticking to capabilities, and questioned the validity of the whole estimates machinery. He concluded:

Clearly if the previous estimates were right, the revised estimates are terribly wrong .... Is our machinery for formulating National Intelligence estimates adequate? All these questions must be asked - and, it is to be hoped, adequately answered - before we take to dancing in the streets to celebrate the disappearance of the missile gap.

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113. *Ibid.*, pars. 10 and 63. TS.
114. *Ibid.*, footnote to par. 5. TS.
115. Gen. Earl W. Barnes (formerly of the Air Force and later of the Board of National Estimates) to Wayne G. Jackson, August 1971.
116. *Newsweek*, 1 Feb 60, p. 17.
117. *New York Times*, 11 Jan 60, 1:6.
118. *Ibid.*, 20 Jan 60, 1:1.
119. Gen. Thomas S. Power, speech at the Economic Club, New York City, 19 Jan 60. Lengthy excerpts attached to Stoertz, *Aspects* (68, above).
120. *New York Times*, 20 Jan 60, 1:1.
121. *Newsweek*, 1 Feb 60, p. 17ff.
122. *New York Times*, 22 Jan 60.
123. *Washington Post*, 23-30 Jan 60.
124. USIB-M-78, 26 Jan 60. USIB files.
125. *New York Times*, 28 Jan 60, 1:2.
126. *Washington Post*, 30 Jan 60, A-14:1.
127. Edward Proctor to Wayne G. Jackson, July 1971.
128. Allen Dulles, testimony before Senate Preparedness Investigating and Space Subcommittees, 29 Jan 60. Transcript in Archives of Legislative Counsel. TS.
129. *Washington Post*, 30 Jan 60, A-1:1.
130. *Ibid.*, 5 Feb 60.
131. Office of Security investigation documents and report to DCI in files of Office of Security, labeled "The Dulles Testimony," 5 Feb 60.

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- 132. Letter, Allen Dulles to Lyndon Johnson, 8 Feb 60.  
E.R. 60-978.
- 133. Letter, Allen Dulles to Gordon Gray, 8 Feb 60.  
E.R. 60-1025.
- 134. Allen Dulles, testimony before Senate Preparedness  
Investigating and Space Subcommittees, 24 Feb 60.  
Transcript in Archives of the Legislative Counsel. TS.
- 135. *New York Times*, 7 Feb 60, IV, 1:1.
- 136. Henry A. Kissinger, "The Necessity for Choice,"  
*Harpers*, February 1960, p. 15.
- 137. *New York Times*, 9 Feb 60, 1:3.
- 138. *Ibid.*, 11 Feb 60, 1:1.
- 139. *Ibid.*, 15 Feb 60, 3:1.
- 140. *Ibid.*, 24 Feb 60, 13:1.
- 141. Gen. Earl W. Barnes to Wayne G. Jackson, August 1971.
- 142. *New York Times*, 1 Mar 60, 4:1.
- 143. *Washington Star*, 24 Feb 60, A-16:1.
- 144. Stoertz, *Aspects* (68, above), p. 24.
- 145. Sidney Graybeal (who did much of the briefing  
for OSI) to Wayne G. Jackson, June 1971.
- 146. Bernard Drell to Wayne G. Jackson, June 1971.  
Stoertz, *Aspects* (68, above), p. 22.
- 147. NIE 11-5-60, 3 May 60, par. 4. TS.
- 148. NIE 11-8-60, 1 Aug 60. TS.
- 149. *Ibid.*, par. 4, footnote 6. TS.
- 150. *Ibid.*, par. 1 b. TS.

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151. Howard Stoertz to Wayne G. Jackson, June 1971.
152. Gen. Earl W. Barnes to Wayne G. Jackson, August 1971.
153. John F. Kennedy, Address to American Legion Convention, attached to Stoertz, *Aspects* (68, above).
154. The Kennedy campaign speeches are reprinted in the "Final Report of the Committee on Commerce," Report 994, Part I, US Senate, GPO, 13 Sep 61.
155. *New York Times*, 5 Nov 60, 14:1.
156. *Ibid.*, 22 Oct 60, p. 22.
157. Theodore White, *Making of a President*, 1960, Atheneum, 1961.
158. NIE 11-4-60. TS.
159. *New York Times*, 7 Feb 61, p. 1.
160. *Ibid.*, 8 Feb 61, p. 1.
161. *Ibid.*, 9 Feb 61, p. 1.
162. *Ibid.*, 10 Feb 61, 7:6.
163. Edward Proctor, *Diary*, attached to Stoertz, *Aspects* (68, above).
164. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *Thousand Days*, Houghton Mifflin, 1965, pp. 316, 499.
165. *New York Times*, 9 Feb 61, 4:3.
166. *Ibid.*, 12 Feb 61.
167. Victor Lasky, *JFK, the Man and the Myth*, Macmillan, 1963.
168. Oleg Penkovskiy, comments, attached to Stoertz, *Aspects* (68, above).

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- 169. NIE 11-8-61, 7 Jun 61. TS.
- 170. Memo, Sherman Kent to Allen Dulles, 28 Jun 61, SC-07626-61-TKH. TS/TKH.
- 171. NIE 11-8/1-61, 21 Sep 61. TS/TKH.
- 172. *New York Times*, 27 Nov 61, edit. page.
- 173. *Ibid.*, 19 Nov 61; Hanson Baldwin, *New York Times*, 26 Nov 61.
- 174. Memo, R. Jack Smith to DDI, 11 Aug 62. CIA Records Center, Job 67-R-584, Box 4: "SAC Problem - 1962, CIA/DIA Task Force."
- 175. USIB-M-175, 2 Oct 61, SC-09754 KH. TS/TKH.
- 176. USIB-M-184, 14 Nov 61; USIB-D-33, TCS 10485-61 KH. TS/TKH.
- 177. Edward Proctor to Wayne G. Jackson, June 1971.

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